

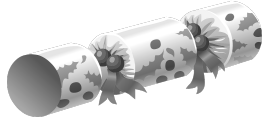


LIFE THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN  
Devotions for Real Life

# Advent Paper Chain 2023

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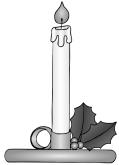
## ***Saturday, December 2***



A fun tradition, in many British and Canadian homes, is popping the Christmas cracker! It's a cardboard tube covered in colorful paper with the ends twisted. Two people pull on opposite ends of the cracker and "pop!" It usually surprises everyone when it goes bang. Out comes a bright paper hat, a small gift, and a message. It must have been a wonderful surprise for the shepherds to hear the announcement of the birth of our Savior. God has given us the gift of His Son to take our sins away. We get to wear His righteousness through faith (Galatians 3:27). And you and I have a wonderful message of God's love to share.

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## ***Thursday, December 7***



The lighting of candles each week on the Advent wreath reminds us of what we hear about Jesus: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" (John 1:9 NIV). Watch the acolytes as they light the candles in church next Sunday. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12 NIV). He brightens our day with His mercy and love. Brighten someone else's day today by sharing His love.

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## ***Tuesday, December 12***



Poinsettias are beautiful flowers with their bright, red leaves, which we use to decorate our altar. It is said that they were used in Nativity processions in Mexico back in the 17th century because the red leaves reminded people of the blood Jesus shed for us as our Savior. In 1825, Joel Robert Poinsette, a botanist and the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, introduced the plant to the United States. In fact, today is National Poinsettia Day.

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## ***Sunday, December 17***



This Sunday, you may find yourself at a birthday party. Many churches sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and enjoy birthday cake and refreshments at this time of the year. Does that seem unusual? It helps to remind us that this is what the celebration of Christmas is all about. It's a birthday celebration. Jesus was born to save us.

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## ***Friday, December 22***



Are you traveling to visit friends or family this Christmas? Are relatives coming to see you? I'm sure you've got a warm bed waiting for them. Imagine Joseph and Mary who found no room in the inn (Luke 2:7). In a Christmas hymn written by Martin Luther called "Welcome to Earth, O Noble Guest," we sing, "O dearest Jesus, holy child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled, A holy shrine within my heart, That You and I need never part."

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