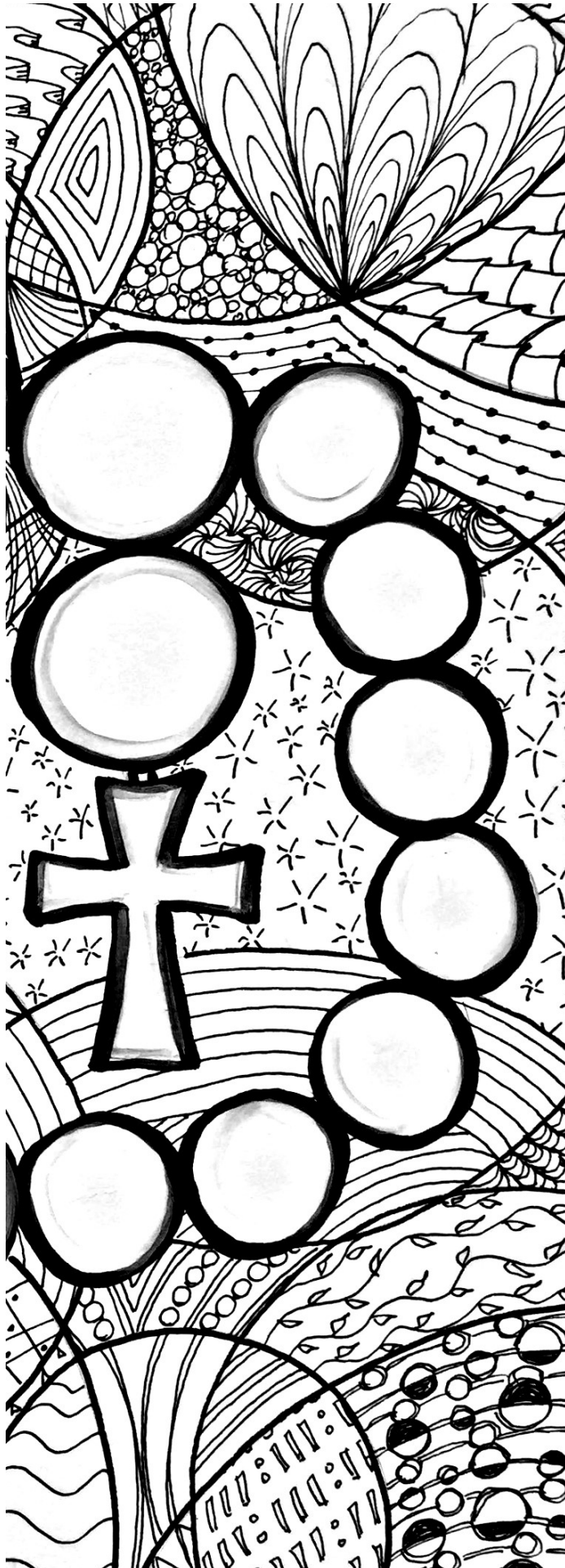




Advent Meditation: Week 4

Bring Us Focus, God of Love

Fill us with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

"May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

Invocation

God, hold us in your love. Fill our souls with your closeness and warm our hearts as we prepare for Christmas. Stay in our focus today and allow us to leave all the distractions behind. Bless this time as we wrestle with the concept of love.

Confession

Lord, you know us. You know this is the hardest concept of all. We love our families – sometimes. We love our friends – most of the time. But loving strangers and people who are different from us is really hard. Forgive us when we ask: what exactly do you mean by love? How much do we have to do? Who is our neighbor? Remind us again, how many times must we forgive? Just look at us Lord, we really need help with this. Teach us gently what it looks like to love. Send us a teacher – or how wonderful if you would come to us yourself! And then, please bring love into focus for us. Amen.

Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted..."

Prayer

Leader: Lord, we want to love you with our hearts and minds and souls and strength. Show us what it looks like to love you.

People: *God will give us a sign – Emmanuel.*

Leader: Lord, we want to be good stewards of this earth. Show us what it looks like to love your creation.

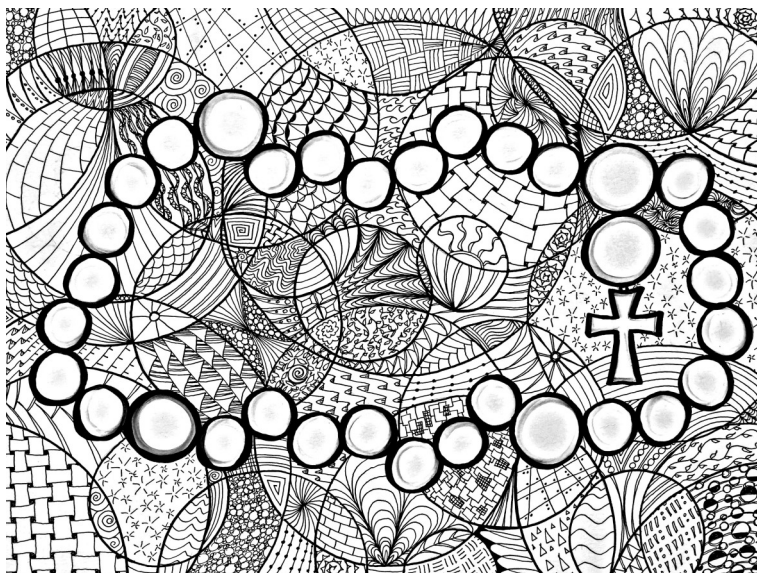
People: *God will give us a sign – Emmanuel.*

Leader: Lord, we want to love our neighbors as ourselves. Show us what it looks like to love all people.

People: *God will give us a sign – Emmanuel.*

Leader: And Lord, show us what it looks like to love even ourselves.

People: *God will give us a sign – Emmanuel. Amen.*



*Toward hope beyond measure
We travel a circle of beads
Infinity without beginning or end*

A time to be still

You are invited into a time of inner stillness. Breathe deeply.

The beauty of prayer beads is that they can help us focus on our conversation with God.

When you are ready, write "love" in the larger bead. Tell God about love you have received, love you give, and what you need help loving in the 7 smaller beads. Then feel free to sit with those prayers or to color the background as you hold those prayers in your heart.

*(If you have a string of prayer beads, hold the cross and pray "**Come oh come Emmanuel.**" Hold the invitation bead and pray "**God will give us a sign - Emmanuel.**" Hold the first cruciform bead and pray, "**God of love, hear my prayers.**" Continue to the right. On each of the smaller beads pray one word for love you have received. When you come to the next cruciform bead repeat "**God of love, hear my prayers.**" In the next set, pray for love given. In the last set, pray for what you need help loving. When you get back to the invitation bead, pray "**God will give us a sign - Emmanuel**" and finish with the cross "**Come oh come Emmanuel, Amen.**")*

A blessing

May God bless us with mornings when we find love in God's ideas.

May God bless us with noon times when we find love in God's work.

May God bless us with evenings when we find hope and peace and joy, knowing that we are loved.

Advent 2016 Week 4

*A gift from WayToLead.org and
GrunewaldGuild.com*