



First United Methodist Church of Hanford  
*Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*



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### **“Together”**

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:38-39

Advent is a season of the Christian year that is a time of preparation for the coming Christ at Christmas. The word *Advent* comes from the Latin verb *advenire*, which means “to come toward, to draw near or to approach.” For four Sundays prior to Christmas celebration, we prepare to celebrate God’s drawing near to us in Jesus. During this season, we anticipate and prepare our hearts for Jesus. Advent is about spending a little time each day anticipating the birth of our Savior, and remembering all those who waited. It is a time to both look back and to look forward. We look back to the birth of Christ, the moment of incarnation, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). We also use this season to look forward to the return of Christ.

Unlike the cultural celebration announcing a new year on January 1st, in the church calendar the new year actually begin with Advent. We want to start this year off Together. 2020 has been marked by many confused, intoxicating and complicated elements that have created more division than unity, more separation than drawing together. This has been affected by and infected by social, physical, emotional and at times even spiritual trials.

But now is the time for us to come together as we spiritually prepare and keep company with God in this special season. It is time for us to pull together to share grace with a world in need of Good News. We are drawn together by the uniting story of Christmas. Though there is much that tries to distract and separate and defeat, we remain convinced “that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height

nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

And so, come TOGETHER with us in this season of preparation and anticipation of the great love that conquers all! May this Advent season, with prayers and actions of faith, renew in us a glorious HOPE, PEACE, JOY & LOVE!

Let us pray: Dear God, Thank you that you sent Jesus on that first Christmas long ago to be our Savior. Forgive us and show us how to live in the confident expectation that you can impact our life, our character and our circumstances. Amen.

“Now I can say I Live a Day” (John Wesley)

Pastor Pablo

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

## Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL** <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS** <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>