

Making Advent and Christmas

Evangelistic



Many churches provide a variety of different opportunities for engagement during Advent and Christmas as it is a time when people are looking for church activities. Some churches have community meals for folks that have nowhere to go, others provide additional opportunities for worship and faith formation for those looking to dig deeper into the season of Advent. As we invite folks to participate in church activities, it's important to ask ourselves: what if?

What if we ask people to share about their lives, and truly listen to hear about their stories? What if we ask people to talk about their faith, their joys and their sorrows? What if these conversations are also an opportunity to share with them who we are as people of faith and why we serve?

What if we use these conversations as an opportunity to share with others about Jesus? How could the questions below guide an evangelistic conversation that invites someone into relationship with God or into Christian community?

- Where have you seen Jesus at work in the community?
- What has Jesus been inviting you to do?
- How has Jesus given you hope?

What if you end a conversation with the invitation for them to join you for worship in a community of Jesus? What if they say sure? You never know until you try.

Luke 2:20 says "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard." We can imagine them telling everyone they met the amazing story of the birth of Jesus. How can we use the work of the shepherds on that first Christmas morning to guide our work this Advent and Christmas season? How can you go out "glorifying and praising God" while you share Jesus' story in this season?

Here is a list of ideas – and we hope you will add to it:

- Take worship to places in your community - a public park, nursing home, station with first responders, the hospital, a mall, a pub, or other community gatherings.
- Go caroling in public places or through your neighborhood. Invite others to join in and sing.
- Go somewhere you can listen to people (coffee shop, mall, bookstore, etc.) – listen to joys and sorrows, laments, and struggles and tell of Jesus welcome and comfort.
- Use the example of Jake Jacobson's Christmas Front Porchin'. Take time in a public place with a small table and chairs and a sign that says: "Tell Me A Christmas Story"
- Stage a Live Nativity or a Christmas Walk (think Stations of the Cross but Christmas!) telling the story of the Word Become Flesh. It can be signs and bible verses at each stop, or a narrator or actor at each stop. Culminate with a campfire, hot chocolate, and Christmas Carol Sing.
- Bless people – find ways to pronounce a blessing upon the people being served at a community dinner or food distribution. Pray for and with the people you meet.
- Invite friends or other family members to serve with you in holiday community service.

- Post invitations on social media, send them by email or post mail, or simply hand them out at a town event.
- Check out the free **ELCA eStore Catalog**: Printed resources, free devotionals, advent calendars, study guides, social statements, ELCA Good Gifts and more which can be ordered and sent to you and your church. <https://store.elca.org>
 - Be sure to get the ELCA World Hunger Advent Calendar and Devotional
- Invite anyone you encountered to come to worship on Christmas Eve/Christmas Day
 - Consider having a flyer, postcard or business card you can give someone with the information on how to join you in-person or online!
- Ask people to tell you their faith journey story – find ways to invite them into further conversations
- Recruit a listening team to accompany volunteer workers so some are working/serving and others are listening to those being served.
- Ask those being served what they think are things the church should be doing to help the community or what are important community needs.
- Adopt families through local charities that the church can sponsor. Ask them the best way to support them with food, gift cards, or Christmas presents.
- Plan worship services that include familiar music and that use a variety of means and media to tell the Christmas story.
- Host a community Blue Christmas Service for people experiencing grief at Christmastime.
- Share photos and articles in your local newspaper or use social media to do paid advertising.
- Host a Christmas pageant for kids and adults, invite newcomers to join the roles and fun.
- Light the church driveway with luminaries or Christmas lights.
- Have parking lot greeters or carolers for Christmas Eve worship.
- Pay attention to the Sunday after Christmas and invite new folks to come back for more Christmas the next week. Plan to celebrate more of Jesus' story with the three kings on Epiphany. Lean in and celebrate the full twelve days of Christmas.
- Work with the neighborhood association to partner on Holiday Events such as tree lighting festivities. Can you say a blessing for the town Christmas tree?
- Consider having a family service earlier on December 24 or even December 23 so that it does not conflict with family events on Christmas Eve.
- Find ways to include kids with stories, activities, and action.
 - What if the children helped light the Advent wreath each week or served as readers and communion assistants?
 - Can you provide Advent at Home resources for kids such as crafts, Advent calendars, devotionals, etc.



Above all else – tell the story – Make Jesus the reason for the season!

Compiled by ELCA Evangelism Network and updated 2025 Oct. 27.

♥ **Jesus said, “I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH.”** Matthew 16:18

You are especially invited to Evangelizing Network Gatherings!

We share devotion, discussion, resources, connections, opportunities, testimonies and prayers.

With our thanks, prayers, and love in Christ always,

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SAVE THE DATES FOR 2026 EVANGELISM NETWORK GATHERINGS

WE WELCOME ALL TO GATHER ON THE 4TH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 2PM

CENTRAL STANDARD TIME. NEW PARTICIPANTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

UPCOMING EVANGELISM NETWORK LARGE GATHERINGS

January 26, 2026: “Ethics for Evangelism-Doing Evangelism in the Midst of Christian Nationalism” led by Rev. Miguel Gomez Acosta, Senior Director of ELCA New Ministry and Evangelism Team, and Rev. Anna-Kari Johnson, ELCA Evangelism Initiatives Program Manager. Rev. Dr. Wondimu Sonessa will lead devotional opening)

February 23, 2026 – “Good News in a World of Partisan News.” Engaging the Angela Danker, author “Red State Christians” and Rev. Erika Uthe.

March 23, 2026 – “Weaving Stories: Your Story and God’s Story.” Rev. Derek Hoven, Director for Evangelical Mission, Florida Bahamas Synod.