



We all know the song......but with everything that's built up around the holiday season, it's easy to forget that Christmas isn't just a day. It's a season. For twelve days from December 25 through January 5, we celebrate the gift we've received in the birth of Christ. And what a gift it is!

This year has been different and harder than so many others. It's brought challenges we never could have imagined. It's forced us to change our plans on a regular basis. It's forced us to think differently about how we worship and gather as the Church. At UBC, most of our worship experiences during this time will be online. **Knowing that we all will be worshipping in our homes this season, we decided to create this guide for you to use at home to help carry you through the season and to give you some ideas for how to continue celebrating and remembering all that Christmas means.** Do some. Do all. However you choose to use this guide, we hope this helps you make the most of the 12 Days of Christmas this year.

DAY 1: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

Celebrate Christ's birth where you are! Consider this poem, **"The Work of Christmas"** from the great spiritual leader Howard Thurman:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

Pray: Give thanks that God loves you and came to live among us to show us how we can love another the way God loves us each and every day.

DAY 2: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

It's Boxing Day in Canada, but let's maybe not throw any punches today. Instead...take some time to find things in your home you're no longer using, box them up, and donate them to someone who can through a local thrift store like **Edwards Street Thrift Store (2315 Lincoln Rd, Hattiesburg).**

As you're boxing up your things, **consider the hymn "Good King Wenceslas" whose story takes place on December 26th.** The closing lines are worth repeating:

***"Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing."***

Pray: In the midst of your prayers, add those for whom Christmas is not a joyful season. Many endure this season rather than celebrate. Ask for God's blessings to be upon them and for God to offer us guidance on how to live and serve in ways that lift others up.

If you know someone have a rough time right now, send them a quick note with a link to our Blue Christmas Service of Remembrance and Hope found [HERE](#).

DAY 3: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

Step away from the rush and hurry and **worship with us online!** We've got a special worship service for you on today [YouTube!](#) You'll recognize familiar faces coming to you from their own homes this Christmas.

After worship, **jot down a list of a few people people you haven't seen in a while or who know are sick right now, and check-in on three of them.** As you pray today, **add these individuals to your prayers.** Pray for healing for those who are sick. Ask God to heal any broken relationships in your life or our community.



DAY 4: MONDAY, DECEMBER 28

It may feel like 2020 has been 987 days long, but now there are only 4 days left! If you haven't already done so, start thinking about how you want to wrap up this year and begin 2021. A great place to start your reflections and resolutions is with thinking about how you can serve your community. There are lots of great opportunities to give of your time all around us and through UBC.

Look back to Thurman's poem, "The Work of Christmas." Lines 6-12 highlight his thoughts on the what that work looks like from a scriptural perspective. **Think back on how you've helped find the lost, heal the broken, feed the hungry, and so on in 2020. How can you continue (or begin) in 2021?** Once you've got some notes or ideas down, add them to your prayers for the day. Ask God to help you see more clearly how you can love your neighbor.

And, then watch a movie or a bowl game or both! It's Monday after all...feel free to unwind!

DAY 5: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29

FIVE GOLDEN RINGS! Ok, you've noticed we're not exactly following the song you may know and love, but we couldn't resist. **Instead of giving your true love enough rings for one hand, as you continue to think through how you want to wrap up this year and begin 2021, think about any year-end gifts you're able to make right now** to the church, to local non-profits, to organizations we support through our missions funds like Delta Hands for Hope, Breadbasket, and Eagles' Nest Food Pantry.

If you're able to make a year-end gift, make sure you do so [ONLINE](#) or postmark it before Thursday, December 31. **Even if times are tight this year and you can't, as you pray today add the organizations and people we support financially at UBC to your prayers.**

Click below to learn more about the organizations we support:

[Alliance of Baptists](#)

[Baptist World Alliance](#)

[Breadbasket](#)

[Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi](#)

[Cooperative Baptist Fellowship—Global](#) (including Mike and Lynn Hutchinson in Togo)

[Delta Hands for Hope](#)

[Eagles' Nest Food Pantry](#)

[International Students studying at USM](#)

[Thames Elementary School](#)

[Those Imprisoned in Mississippi whom we support through our Prison Ministry](#)

DAY 6: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30



It's Hump Day. It's almost the New Year. **You need something fun to think about today. Why not music?** So many fun live shows were cancelled this year and artists and concertgoers alike were forced to come up with creative ways to experience music this year. *Did you listen to your old favorites to make it through the year? Did you discover new music this the year?*

What are songs that define 2020 for you?

Take some time today to think about the best music you heard this year. Jot them down and then add them to the list [HERE](#) so we can share our recommendations with our friends and neighbors at UBC. As you add them, we'll build a playlist on our Spotify channel for you as we turn the page to 2021!

As you pray today, add our international students to your prayers. So many of them are students in the School of Music at USM and they regularly use their gifts to brighten our worship. Chances are a worship service in our sanctuary (back when we could do that...Fingers crossed for 2021!) or online took you somewhere else because of the skill and beauty in their music. Give thanks for them and that God created a world full of ways to make a joyful noise!

DAY 7: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

As you continue to reflect on how you want to wrap up this year and begin 2021, **take some time today to think about the best books you read this year.** Chances are you've read some great books that made you laugh or cry or think or all three. What were they? **Jot them down and then add them [HERE](#) to our Best Books of 2020 List.**

There are sure to be some you've already read, but **there's got to be some you can add to your 2021 reading list. Who knows? You might even be able to find some titles in our library at UBC!**

As you move through the day, remember also that **on this day 158 years ago, enslaved Africans across the United States stayed up late, waiting and watching for the clock to strike midnight knowing that when it did, the Emancipation Proclamation would grant them freedom.** While the news of freedom didn't make it to everyone until June 19 (Juneteenth), that night became the first Watch Night, a tradition followed to this day by many African Americans of waiting, watching, and praying for freedom. **As you pray today, remember those who still struggle to find freedom and to feel the warmth and comfort of God's love.**

At UBC, we're honored to minister to and share stories from those across our state who've lost their freedom through our Prison Ministry and our monthly newsletter, the Good News. **If you're looking for a way to continue the work of Christmas and help provide to "release the prisoner" today as Thurman notes, click [HERE](#) to send an encouraging note the individuals on our Prison Ministry list.**



DAY 8: FRIDAY, JANUARY 1

Happy New Year! We're all glad to bid adieu to 2020 and today we can. It's finally 2021! Eat your black-eyed peas (even if it's just one single, solitary pea) and some greens. C'mon, it's tradition, and the superstitious among us believe it helps bring health and wealth in the new year. We can all agree that those are two things 2020 has impacted greatly across the board. May 2021 bring good health and increased wealth to you so we can all do things we love to do together (without Zoom!) and provide us opportunities to experience the warmth and comfort of God's love.

As you pray today, give thanks for all the creative people who use their imaginations to bring joy into our lives, especially all the creative folks who've helped us navigate the pandemic from home with entertainment, worship, and much, much more. We say that UBC is a place that experiences God in new and creative ways. Ask God to help you (and us!) pay attention to the creative ways God shows up all around us each and every day.

DAY 9: SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

Soon students, staff, and faculty will return to USM for the Spring semester. **We want to make sure the Eagles' Nest Food Pantry is well stocked** to support those who need help making ends meet and having enough to eat so they can do their best work. Maybe today is your regular day to do your grocery shopping. Maybe it's not. Whether you're shopping today or later in the week, **here are items the pantry staff like to have on hand for clients that you can pick up and drop off at UBC the next time you're around the church:**

Ramen Noodles	Peanut Butter	Brown Rice	Cereals	Toilet Paper
Pasta	Canned Beans	Grits & Oatmeal	Granola & Protein Bars	
Canned Chicken	Pasta Sauce	Soy Milk	Dry Beans (pinto, lentils, navy, etc.)	

While you're at the store (or while you're at your computer placing your pick-up order), also make sure you have the following ingredients at home. You'll need them if you want to make a Twelfth Night Cake on Tuesday:

- 3½ cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- Powdered sugar
- 3 chocolate coins (or another edible treat) to hide in the cake
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ cups (3 sticks) butter, softened
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 large eggs
- ½ cup white chocolate chips
- 3 small gifts for those who find the tokens
- 1½ cups light brown sugar
- 1½ cups eggnog

As you pray today, pray for those who rely upon the Eagles' Nest Food Pantry to make ends meet.

DAY 10: SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

Step away from the rush and hurry once again this week and **worship with us online!** We've got two special worship services for you today. Available throughout the day on **YouTube is our traditional morning worship service with Rev. Dr. Jason Coker**, Coordinator of Together For Hope and CBF Mississippi.

At 10:00am in our back parking we're resuming Drive-In Worship. For the past two years we've celebrated **The Breaking Up of Christmas** on this Sunday (our version of the traditional Appalachian celebration) with bluegrass music throughout the service. Well, since we didn't really set up enough Christmas decorations to take down this year, **we can't very well celebrate like we normally do, but we can still have bluegrass music during worship.** Join us for worship!

After worship, look back over the list you made last Sunday of people you haven't seen in a while or who know are sick right now, and check-in on three more of them this afternoon. Add these individuals to your prayers today.



DAY 11: MONDAY, JANUARY 4

Monday's back again. Just like clockwork. **This week the legislative session begins in Jackson and our congressional delegation returns to Washington, D.C. to begin the 117th United States Congress.** With all the difficulties brought on by the pandemic and the widening gaps between the haves and have nots in our state and across the nation, **we need our leaders to find ways to collaborate in helping our communities and families have access to the support they need to thrive.** We need them especially to consider the needs of those who, like many in the Hattiesburg area are calling feeding programs like Breadbasket this morning to get help in taking care of their families.

The ballots may be behind us, but as those who have been elected return to the capitols, **let us pray for them and the decisions before them regarding education, healthcare, and much more. Let us also pray for those families calling Breadbasket this week for assistance** that they may find the relief they seek and that it might serve as a springboard toward a better and brighter tomorrow.

DAY 12: TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

We made it! Twelve whole days of doing something new this Christmas season. We hope this has provided you with a wonderful chance to keep the Christmas spirit alive beyond December 25. And what a better way to celebrate than with cake! Remember those ingredients we told you that you would need for a Twelfth Night Cake? Well today's the day! Here's the recipe from [My Own Sweet Thyme](#):

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.
2. Grease and flour a 10-inch Bundt pan or spray well with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the sugars and butter with an electric mixer.
5. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition to fully incorporate.
6. Add the flour mixture one-third at a time, alternating with the egg. Beat until smooth.
7. Transfer the batter to the prepared Bundt pan being careful not to overfill. (Place any remaining batter in a smaller prepared pan, such as a loaf pan.) Bake at 325 degrees until it tests done, approximately 1 hour.
8. Remove cake from the oven and cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cake from pan and allow to rest on the wire rack until completely cool.
9. When cool, turn cake upside down. Make three hidden slits in the bottom of the cake with a sharp knife. Carefully push a chocolate coin or candy into the slit until hidden in the cake.
10. Turn the cake onto a serving platter. Sprinkle with a little powdered sugar. Decorate with chocolate stars, if desired.



To make chocolate stars (if desired):

Melt 1/2 cup of chocolate chips or white chocolate chips in a small container. When melted and smooth scrape the chocolate into a small Ziploc bag and trim 1/4 inch from a lower corner of the bag. Pipe the soft chocolate in rough star shapes onto a baking sheet or cutting board covered with waxed paper or parchment paper. After covering the surface with stars, place the stars in the refrigerator for five minutes or so, or until set and firm. Peel the stars from the paper and arrange on and around the cake.

Take a picture of your cake and share it with us on Facebook or Instagram!

As you pray today, remember that the students we know, love, and support at Thames Elementary are returning from their winter break today. Pray that they might have a joy-filled semester of learning and that we might continue to find new ways to support them as they grow into the leaders our community needs. Pray a prayer of thanks as well for God's willingness to live and dwell among us, to shine a light in the darkness, to show us how shine our light as well.

And as you go through your day, get the song, "This Little Light of Mine" stuck in your head. Maybe it already is...Carry it with you into the season of Epiphany, a season of light:



*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!*