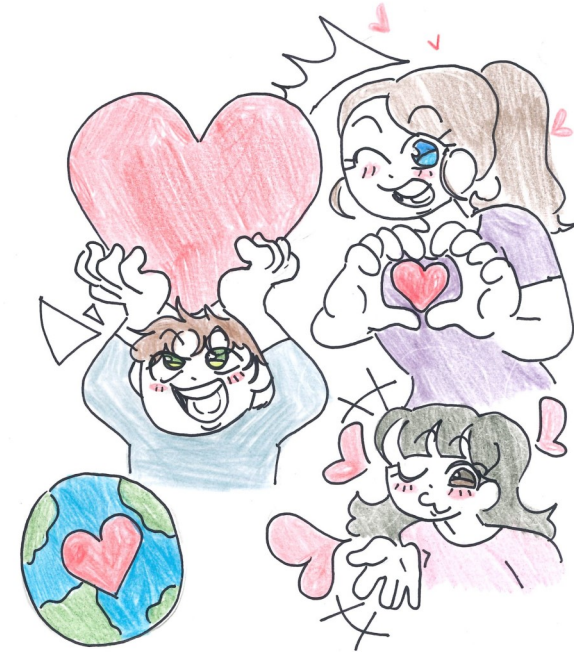




Advent Reflections

LOVE



By Percyna Pitiot

Mahalo to the authors and artists who have contributed to "Advent Reflections." This volume contains works by:

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Advent Reflections

This devotional contains reflections, artwork, and prayers for a portion of the Advent season created by the members and friends of Church of the Holy Cross UCC in Hilo, Hawai'i. Advent is a season of preparation and of expectation, an awareness of what has already happened and what is still to come. May these devotional offerings help you find the hope, peace, joy, and love of God within your soul.



Merry Christmas from
Church of the Holy Cross

Sunday, December 21

As I take my daily walk at the crack of dawn, I marvel at the beauty of the early morn. Majestic Maunakea is greeted by the first ray of sunshine (if it's not raining). At times the sun casts the most beautiful crimson glow as it shines on the cloud. Dozens of doves and mynah birds are sitting on the utility lines waiting for whatever birds wait for. Koleas are running in their favorite yards. I wonder: Do early birds really get the worms?

Seeing the beauty of nature and enjoying God's creation, I say to myself, "You're lucky you live in Hawai'i!"

Reiko Masutomi

Monday, December 22

A favorite Christmas card depicted a small lamb looking up at the Christmas star. Looking at the card would most likely have me humming the song "Do You Hear What I Hear?" that contains the lyrics "Do you see what I see?" This simple image invites me into the heart of Advent—a season of waiting, wonder, and hope.

I see a lamb and wonder what it represents.

Could the lamb represent Christ? A lamb gentle and innocent, that reminds me of the purity and humility that Christ himself embodied

Could the lamb represent me? It calls to mind my own spiritual longing, as I look up in faith, seeking guidance and meaning.

Could the lamb represent others? The innocent seeking justice, the forgotten widows and orphans, the humble recognizing the miraculous or is the idea that even the smallest or most vulnerable can witness and be a part of something so big?

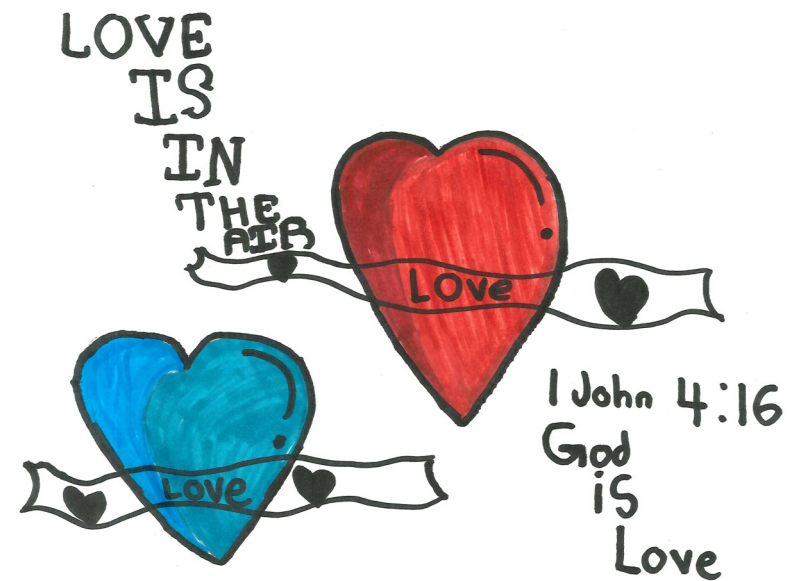
I see a Christmas Star, a guiding light in the night sky that led the wise men to the Christ Child. A light in the darkness. A revelation of promises kept and angelic choruses. The star reminds me that that God's light reaches everyone—the humble, the wise, and even the smallest or most vulnerable among us. Matthew 2:9-10

As I sing the words, "Do you see what I see?" I am invited to look deeper, to notice the miracles unfolding around me, and to recognize that I, too, am part of God's story. The lamb's upward gaze is a symbol of hope, faith, and the desire to witness something greater than myself. What a huge message from a simple picture!

Prayer:

Lord, as I journey through Advent, help me to see with the eyes of innocence and faith. Let Your guiding light lead me closer to You. May I recognize Your promises kept and Your love revealed in unexpected ways. Make my heart humble and open, ready to worship the newborn King. Amen.

Lorraine Davis



Gracie Roach

Bright lights?

No borders?

Embraced?

Rejoice! Rejoice in Christ Jesus' ever-present, unfailing infinite love.

Jane Kawazoe

Tuesday, December 23



Wednesday, December 24

We love because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

And now faith, hope and love abide, these three: and the Greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

According to scripture, we should all love! There are many kinds of love: *Agape* – unconditional God’s love; *Eros* – romantic love; *Storge* – family love, *Philia* – brotherly love; *Philautia* – self-love; *Xenia* – hospitality love. *Agape* is described as God’s love for his children. *Eros* involves physical attraction. *Storge* is love for family. *Philia* is love between good friends. *Philautia* regards one’s own happiness. *Xenia* is friendship of guests.

There are so many ways to share love. When you share your love, the love is returned. If you feel unloved, you can do something about that! God loves his children, therefore, there is no reason for anyone not to love!

Anne Sadayasu

Thursday, December 25: Christmas Day

World War II, December 7, 1941, dimmed our world’s light.

In a miniscule corner of our world, Hawi, North Kohala, a light more than a flicker shone brightly.

The hub of our community, a large building situated in midtown Hawi, was converted by the USO (United Services Organizations) as a place of rest and recreation for our military men. Especially, we thought, for the Marines at Camp Tarawa living in a sea of green tents along the slopes of Waimea.

Each Sunday morning, the USO building was transformed into a blessed haven for children. We were elementary school children of various ages, ethnicities, and denominations.

We loved Sunday School. Worshipping, praying, singing hymns, having fun together with families and new friends. Learning Bible lessons, listening attentively to stories told and illustrated on a homemade movie roll. Celebrating Christmas and Easter brightness brought joy and excitement to our lives.

In my camera’s eye, I picture during worship time feet dangling, little bodies sinking slowly into soft, oversized overstuffed chairs and sofas. I picture offerings of pennies, nickels, and dimes laid gently in small beige woven trays. I hear sweet voices singing with gusto favorite hymns. I hear the kind, melodious voice of our beloved, dedicated coordinator who, by God’s grace, connects us as a single large family in Christ. We feel God’s presence and His love. We had wonderful times, joyful times. Memories of joy layered upon layer; gifts stored in our hearts.

Our country at war. Our Sunday School, our haven, our sanctuary. A lasting peace, a beautiful calm, a feeling of security and stability descended upon us and sustained us week after week throughout troubled uncertain times. Blessed were we, enfolded so lovingly in God’s merciful love.

Tiny town?