

Comfort AND JOY



FAMILY ACTIVITIES FOR A
MAGICAL AND MEANINGFUL
CHRISTMAS SEASON



DUNWOODY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Create a "Countdown to Christmas" paper chain.

By removing one link for each day, this paper chain is a cute and easy way to count down the days until Christmas.

Materials Needed:

Colored paper

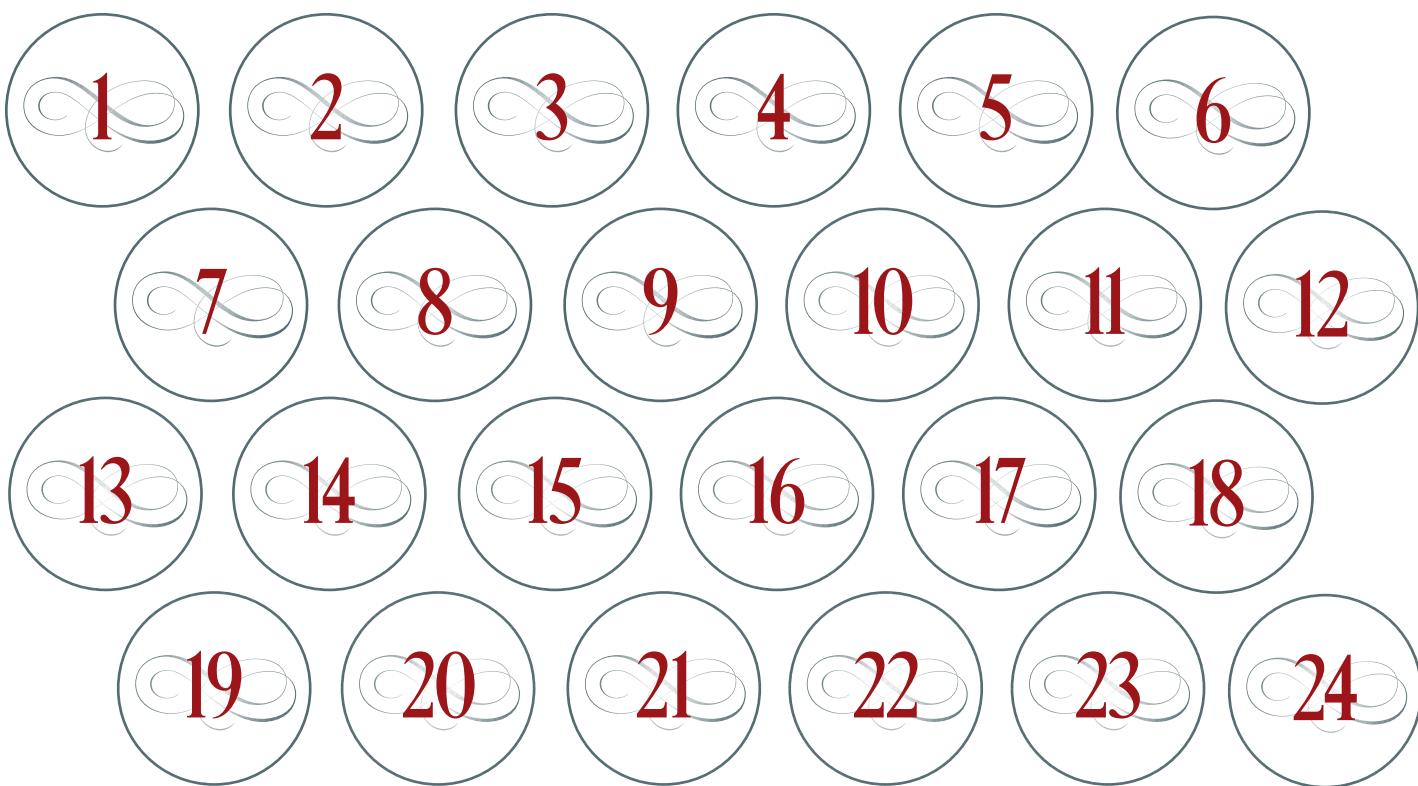
Scissors

Glue or glue sticks

Numbers and Christmas link (below)

Instructions:

- Cut the colored paper into 24 equal strips.
- Bend the first piece of paper into a circle, overlapping the ends slightly and fasten together using glue.
- Repeat folding each piece of paper through the last to create a linked chain.
- For the final link, cut out and join the Christmas link (below).
- Cut out and attach numbers to each link.



It's FINALLY Christmas!

Make a holiday playlist.

Whether you love carols, the classics, or contemporary jams, music is a great way to usher in the Christmas spirit. Assemble some of your favorite festive tunes using your music library or an online music or video streaming service. You can even share your playlist with friends to spread the joy!

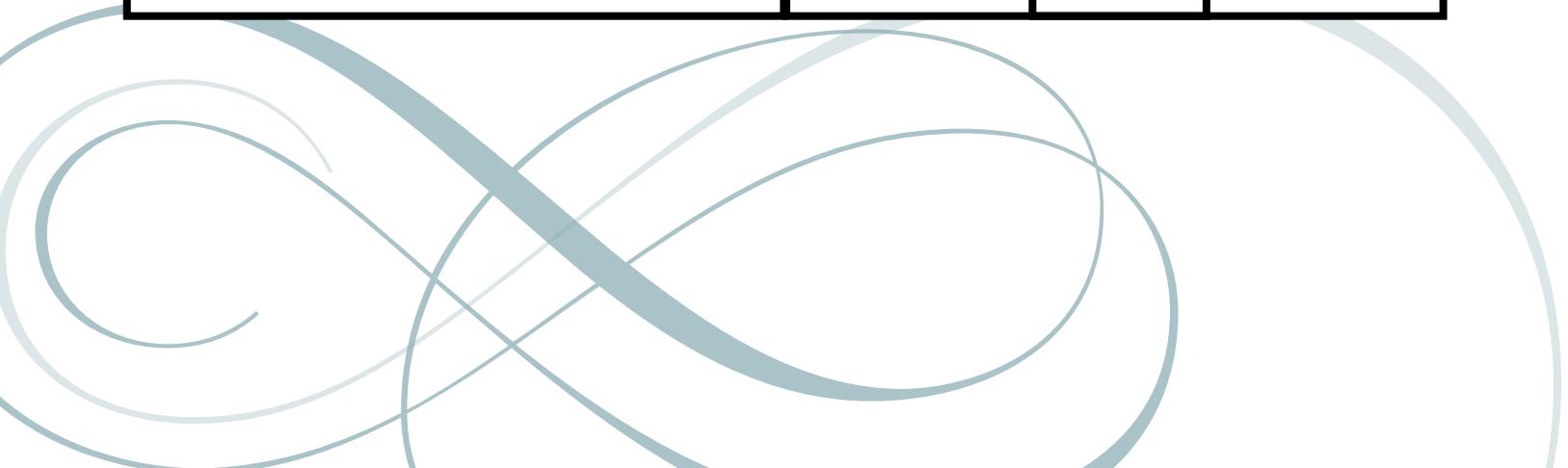
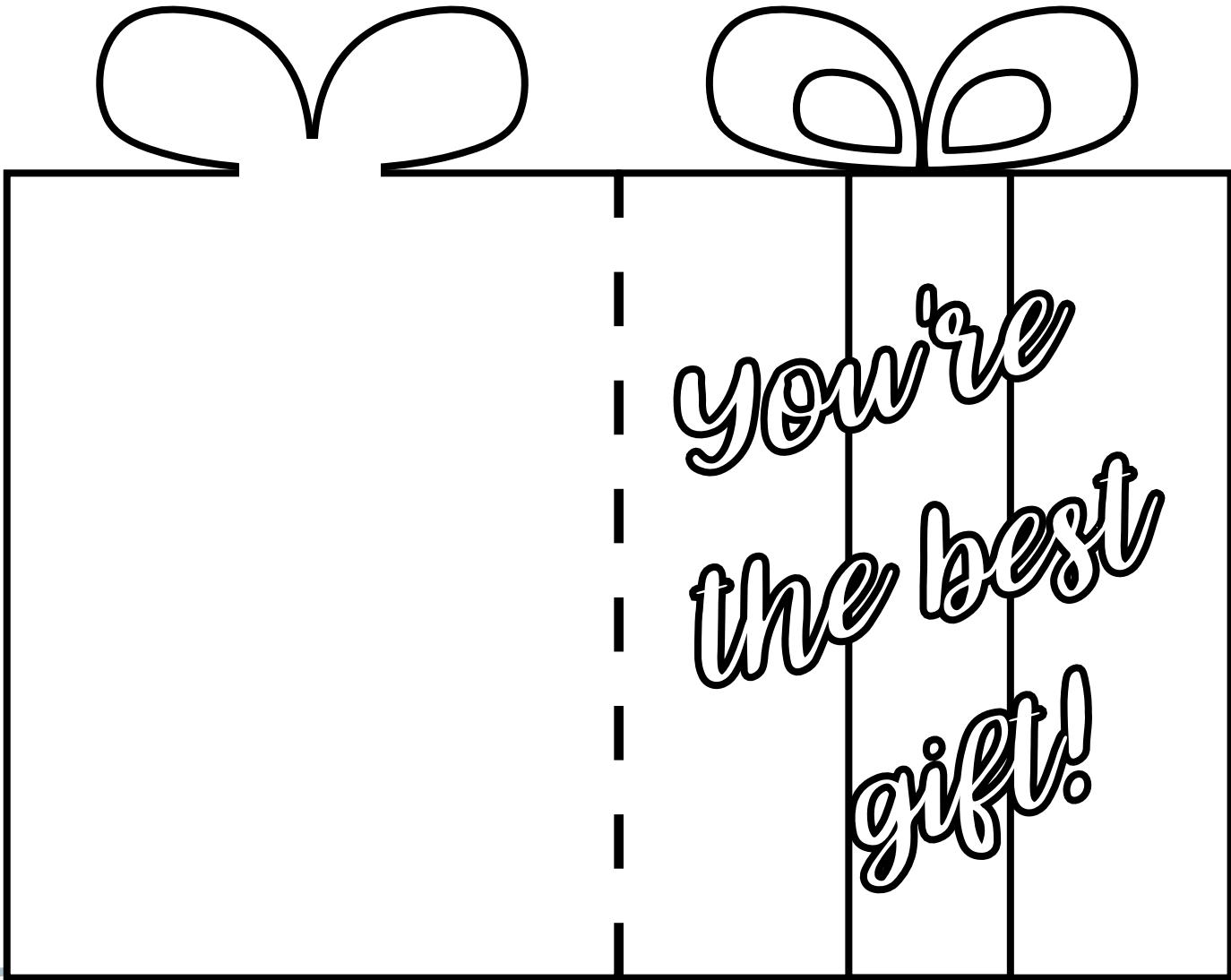


Take a Christmas photo with family or friends.

Gather your loved ones (even pets!), dress in your holiday finest, and snap a special photo to commemorate the season. Craft a seasonal scene in your home, or find a cheerful backdrop in your neighborhood, local shopping center, or church. Even if you don't choose to include your photo in a Christmas card, you can capture the memories of this year or share on social media.

Make a holiday card for your mail carrier or sanitation worker.

Christmas is the perfect time to say "thanks" to the people who make our daily lives better. Color and cut out the card template below, and write a short note of gratitude and cheer inside!





Decorate Christmas cookies to share.

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter (room temp.)
2 teaspoons ground ginger	3/4 cup (packed) light brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon	1/2 cup molasses
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

- Sift flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda and salt into large bowl.
- In another large bowl beat butter with an electric hand mixer at medium speed until smooth and creamy (about 2 minutes).
- Add brown sugar and beat 1 minute.
- Add molasses and beat until fluffy (about 2 minutes).
- Add egg and beat until well blended (about 1 minute).
- Reduce speed to low and beat in vanilla.
- Add flour mixture and beat on low speed to blend.
- Gather dough into ball and divide in half. Form each half into ball and flatten into a disk. Wrap disks separately in plastic and chill until firm (at least 4 hours).
- Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350 degrees F.
- Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Working with one disk at a time, roll out dough between two sheets of wax paper to 1/4-inch thickness.
- Cut out shapes and transfer to prepared sheets spacing 2 inches apart.
- Bake one sheet at a time until cookies are firm on top and slightly darker around edges, about 8 minutes for smaller shapes and up to 15 minutes for larger shapes.
- Cool completely on rack, then decorate as desired!

Donate a toy to a child in need.

Christmas is a perfect opportunity to give the gift of joy and fun through toy donations. Now might even be a good time to go through gently loved toys and make room for new ones!

Looking for a place to donate? Check out Dunwoody UMC's Angel Tree, located in our tree lot (on Mt. Vernon Rd.)!



Share some warmth.

As the winter cold creeps in, comfort and warmth can be hard to find for neighbors experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Donating new or gently used coats, scarves, hats or other warm outerwear is a great way to spread the warmth of the Christmas season.

Looking for a place to donate? Consider the Community Assistance Center! Learn more at ourcac.org/give-clothing-stuff/

Cook up a batch of homemade hot cocoa.

Ditch the powdered stuff and gather the family for a homemade hot cocoa tasting. Use a basic recipe like the one below, then dress up your mug with spices or sweets to create your own concoction. Try adding cinnamon, a candy cane, almond extract, or even a dash of chili powder and discover your favorite taste!

Ingredients

- 3 cups whole or 2% milk
- 8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
- 4 Tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 Tablespoons cocoa powder

Instructions

- In a saucepan, melt the semi-sweet chocolate with 1/4 cup of the milk over low heat. Stir constantly to avoid burning.
- When chocolate has fully melted, add granulated sugar and cocoa powder. Whisk until smooth.
- Pour the remaining milk into the chocolate mixture.
- Whisk until combined and heated to desired temperature.
- Dress your cocoa up with marshmallows, whipped cream, or spices, and enjoy!



Enter into the story of Christmas.

Read the story of the first Christmas in Bible (Luke 2), then color one of the nativity scenes below as you reflect on the story of Jesus' birth. Which character in the story is most interesting to you? Which character are you most like?



Want to experience the sights and sounds of Bethlehem in person?
Attend Dunwoody UMC's live nativity event, **Come to the Manger!** (Sunday, December 4, 4:30- 7:00 p.m. / Dunwoody UMC Tree Lot)



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 | 4:30 - 7pm

Attend a Christmas musical event.

From caroling, to bells, to choirs, the Christmas season is full of music. Gather your friends and family to experience the sounds of Christmas at a seasonal concert. Check out local schools, churches, or community groups to find an option that suits your tastes.

Fans of Christmas choral music may enjoy "**This Christmastide**", featuring Dunwoody UMC's Chancel Choir, Musica Gloria Chamber Choir, the Dunwoody Handbell Ringers, and string orchestra. The concert will feature beloved Christmas songs that celebrate the sacredness and nostalgia of the season. (*Sunday, December 11, 4:00 p.m. Dunwoody UMC Sanctuary*)



Light a candle for someone you miss.

The holidays can be full of mixed emotions, especially if you're missing someone special this season. Take a moment to remember and give thanks for a loved one - either someone who has passed, or someone who is far away - by lighting a candle in their honor.

Consider attending the **Longest Night Service of Hope**, a quiet worship service held on the longest night of the year, when we acknowledge the hardships we face and remember that Christ, the light of the world, brings us hope. (*Thursday, December 20, 7:00 p.m. / Dunwoody UMC Chapel*)

Host a cookie exchange.

Gather with your friends for a cookie exchange. Each guest brings two dozen cookies baked from their favorite recipe. Guests swap to create plate full of a variety of goodies! Looking for a fool-proof recipe? Try this family favorite from Dunwoody Kids Director, Tambryn Freund!

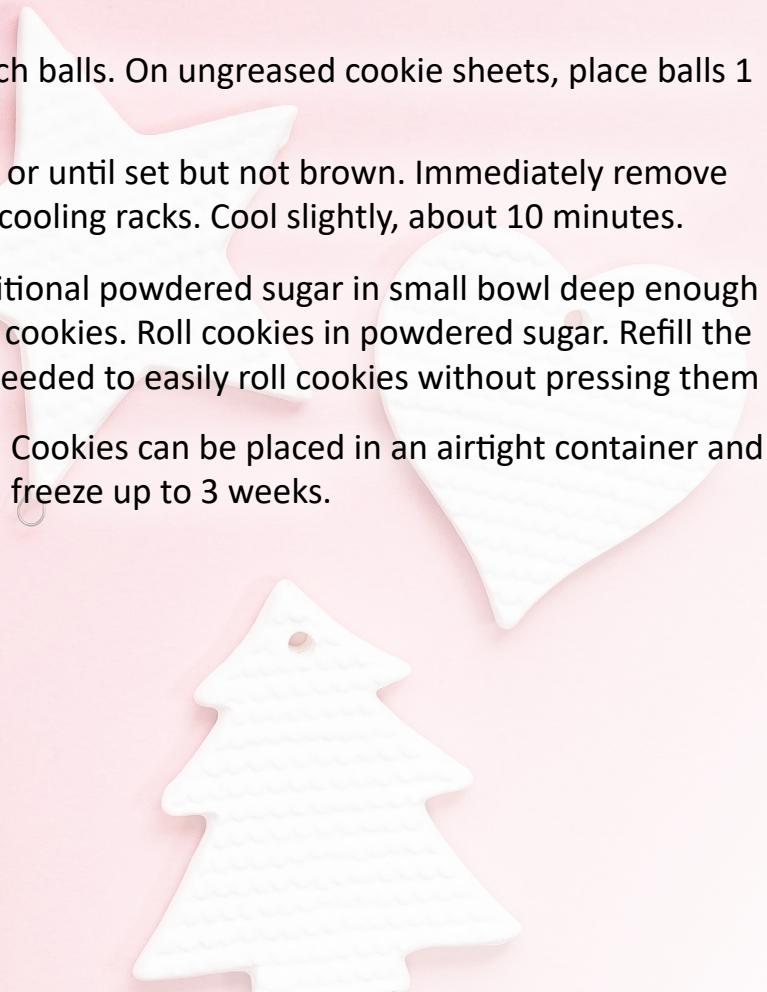
Snowball Cookies

Ingredients

2 cups powdered sugar (split ½ cup and 1.5 cups)	1 teaspoon rum extract
1 cup butter or margarine, softened	2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1 cup finely chopped walnuts or omit
	1/4 teaspoon salt

Instructions

- Heat oven to 325°F.
- In large bowl, beat 1/2 cup powdered sugar, the butter, vanilla, flour, and salt until dough forms.
- Stir in walnuts (if using).
 - Shape dough into 1-inch balls. On ungreased cookie sheets, place balls 1 inch apart.
 - Bake 13 to 17 minutes or until set but not brown. Immediately remove from cookie sheets to cooling racks. Cool slightly, about 10 minutes.
 - Place additional powdered sugar in small bowl deep enough for rolling cookies. Roll cookies in powdered sugar. Refill the sugar as needed to easily roll cookies without pressing them
 - Cookies can be placed in an airtight container and freeze up to 3 weeks.

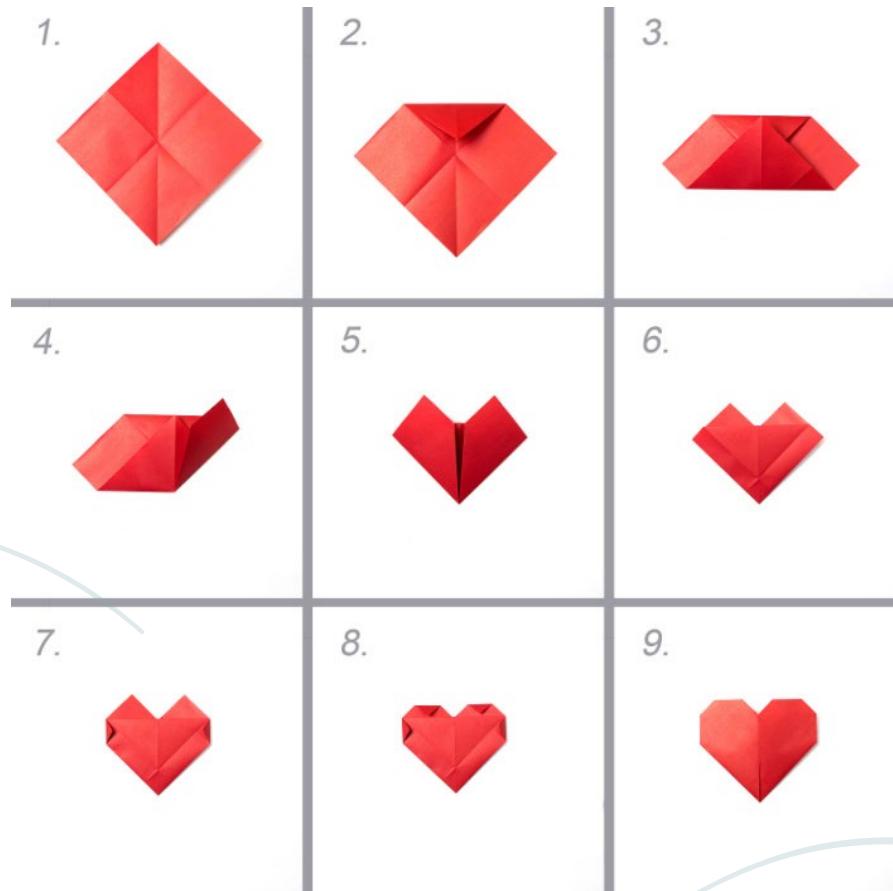




Send a paper hug to a distant loved one.

Christmas cards aren't the only way to mail some love and cheer to friends and family far away. Try making these origami hearts as a way to send a paper hug to a loved one this Christmas.

- Fold the square diagonally from one corner to the other & then repeat on the other diagonal.
- Fold down the tip of the top corner to the middle.
- Fold the tip of the bottom corner to the upper fold.
- Now take the right side and fold up from the middle along the midline.
- Repeat on the left side.
- Turn paper over.
- Fold the outer corner tips back onto the back on both sides.
- Fold down the pointy tips on the top back to the paper edge on both right and left tip.
- Turn over and decorate as desired.



Christmas Eve at DUNWOODY UMC



1:00 p.m. | Communion Service
in the CHAPEL

4:00 p.m. | Family Nativity Service
in the SANCTUARY

5:30 p.m. | Modern Service
in the FELLOWSHIP HALL

7:00 p.m. | Communion Service
in the SANCTUARY

9:00 p.m. | Lessons & Carols
in the SANCTUARY

11:00 p.m. | Communion Service
in the SANCTUARY

www.dunwoodyumc.org/christmas