



# 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

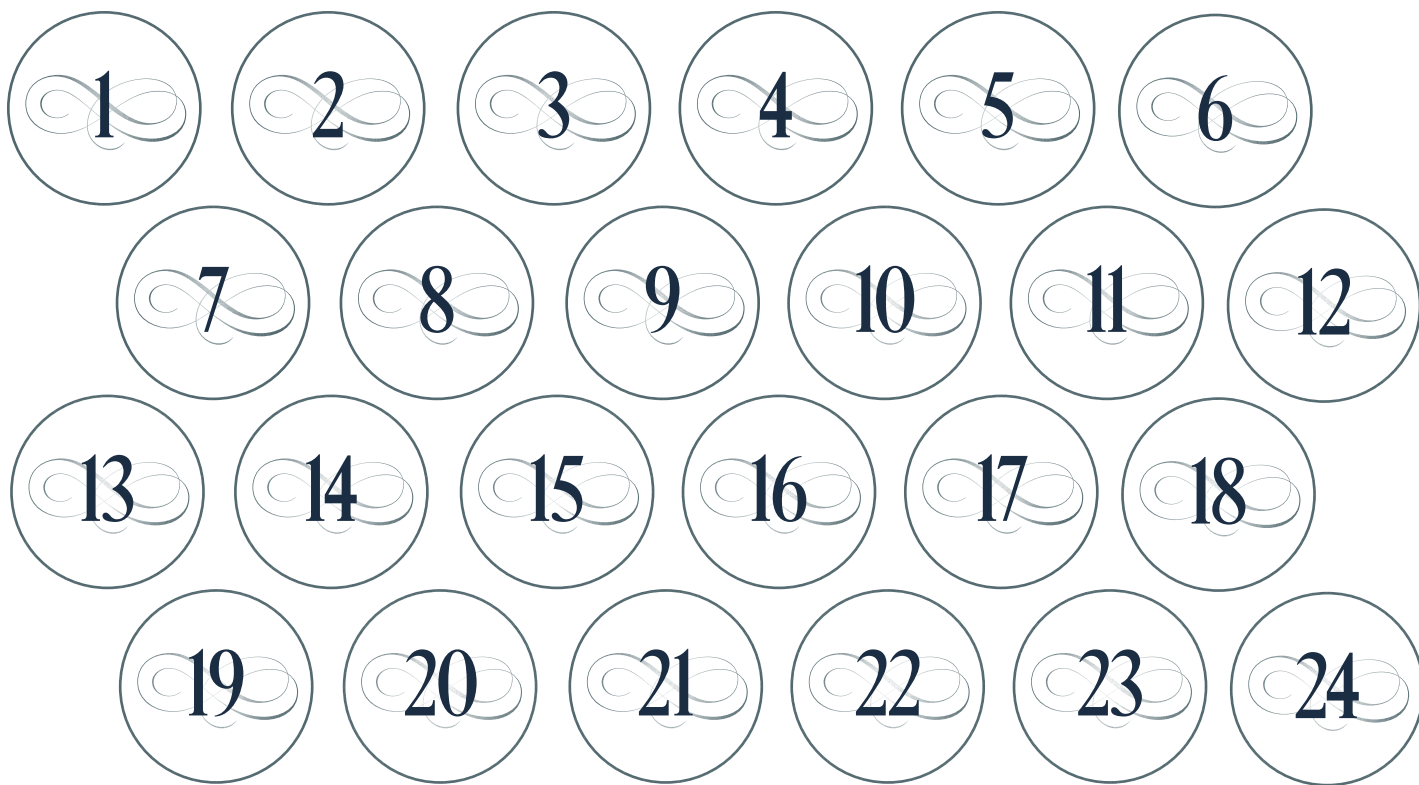
Scissors

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!

Need some ideas? Try ours on Spotify!

<https://spoti.fi/3srVkkM>



## *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. Stop by DUMC's Tree Lot for a festive photo in our forest!



# 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/](http://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

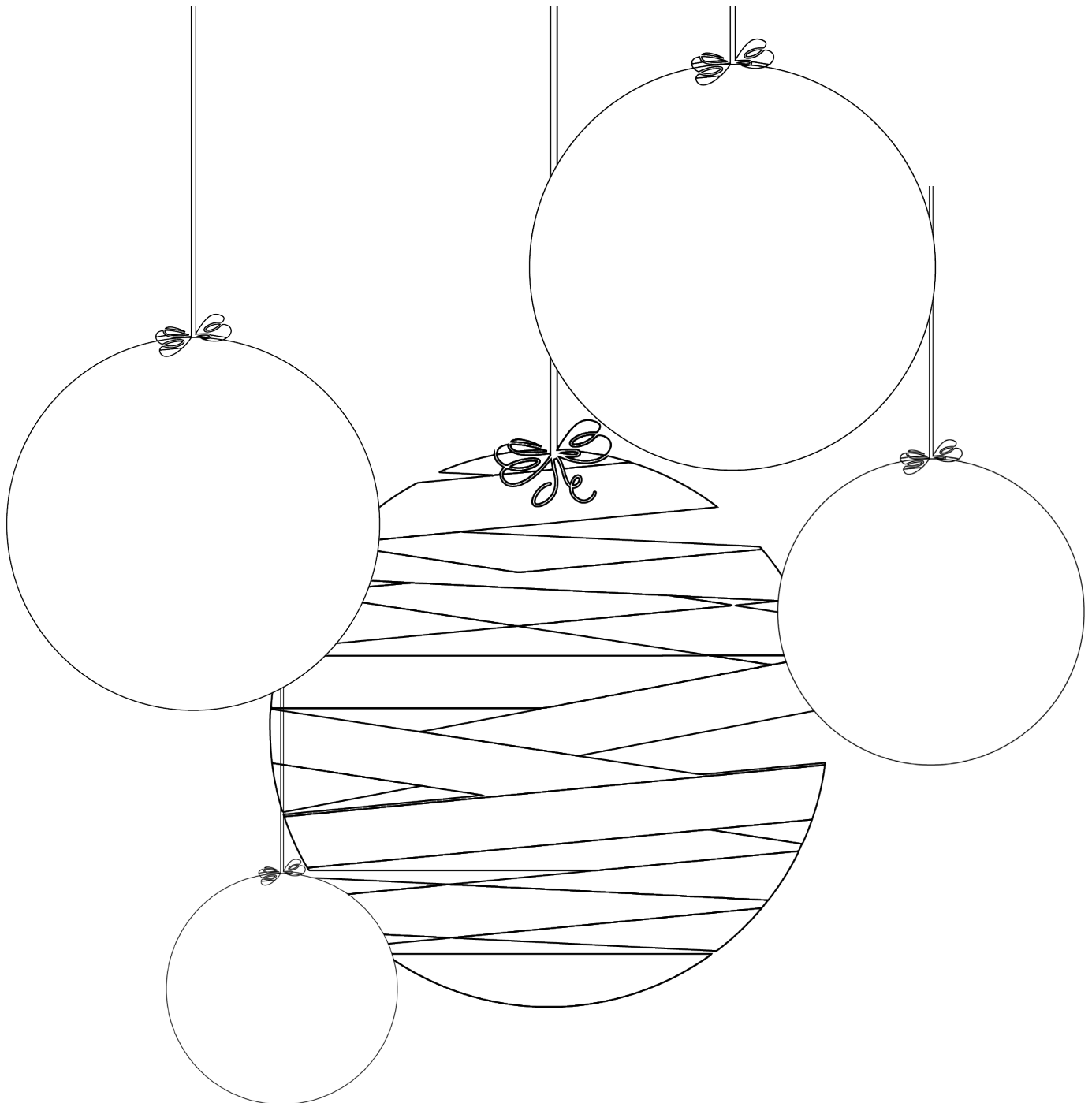
- In a saucepan, melt the semi-sweet chocolate with 1/4 cup of the milk over low heat. Stir constantly to avoid burning.
- When chocolate has fully melted, add granulated sugar and cocoa powder. Whisk until smooth.
- Pour the remaining milk into the chocolate mixture.
- Whisk until combined and heated 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 the ornament below. Write a name of one of the story's characters (Mary, Joseph, shepherds, etc.) on each of the main ornament's stripes. Write your name (or names of friends and family) on the other ornaments. 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 3, 4-30- 7:00 p.m. | Dunwoody UMC Tree Lot)



# 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 "**And Glory Shone Around**", 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 10, 4:00 p.m. in the 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 21, 7:00 p.m. in the 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 a 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 cup butter or margarine, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 teaspoon rum extract

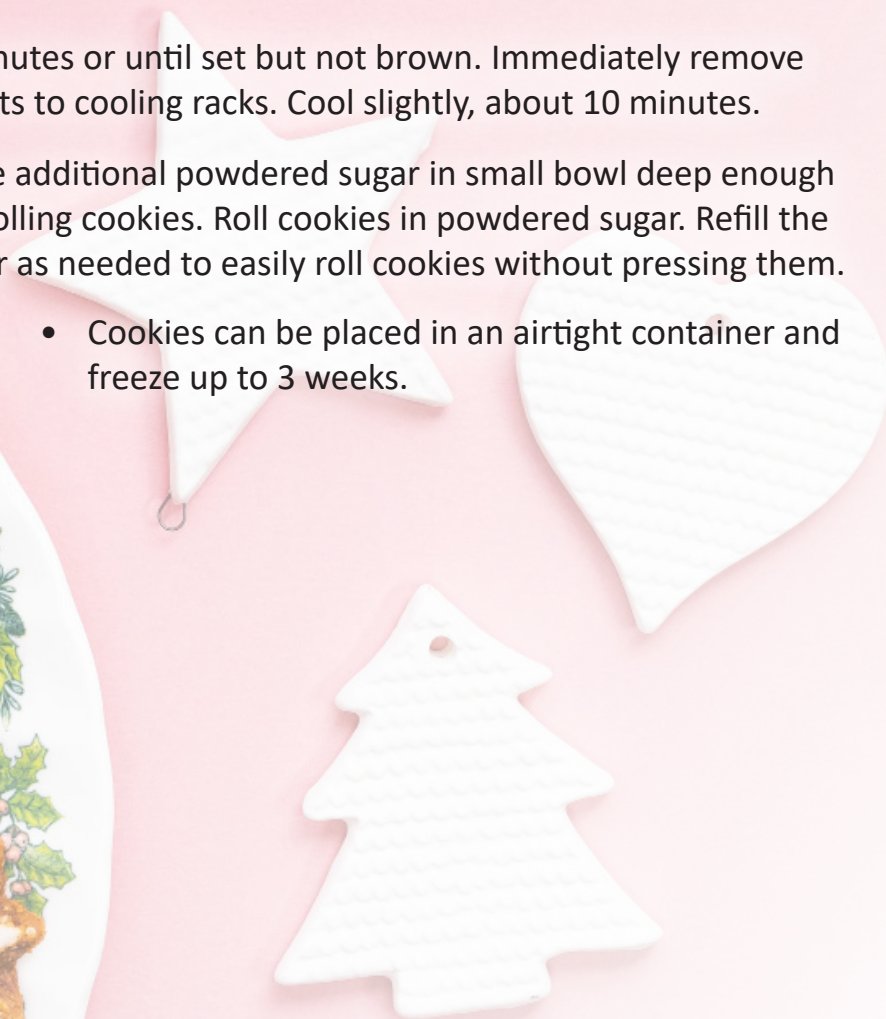
2 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup finely chopped walnuts or omit

1/4 teaspoon salt

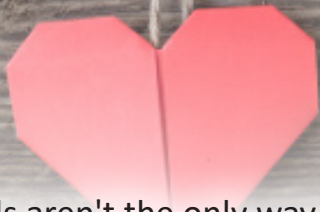
### Instructions

- 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.



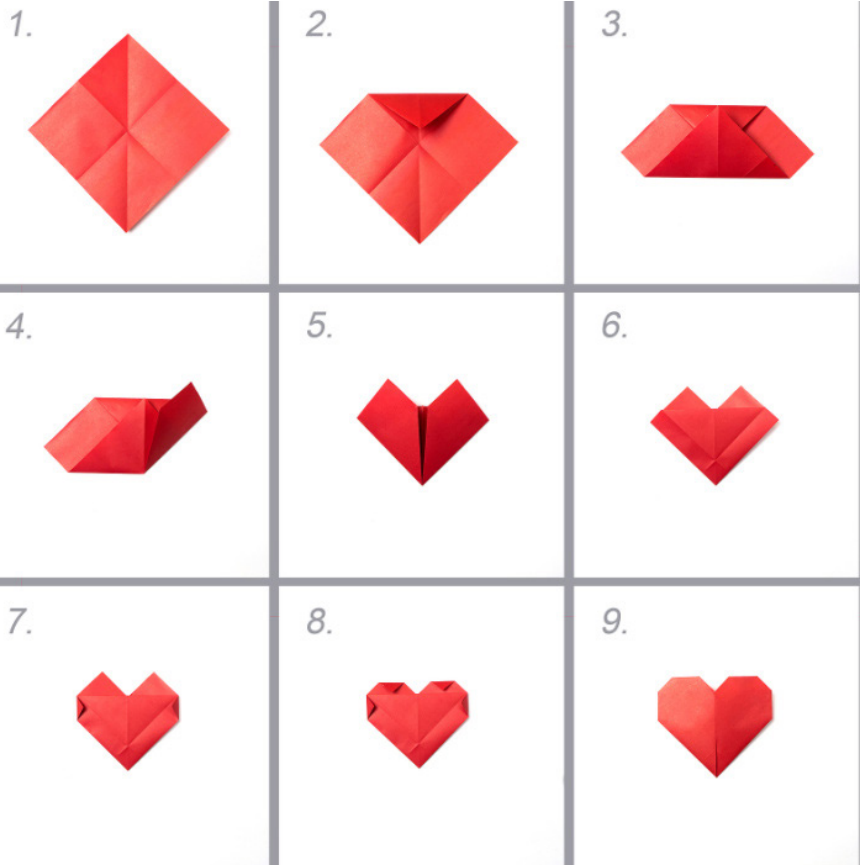


# SEND A *paper hug* TO A LOVED ONE.



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.



# CREATE A *bird feeder* for your FEATHERED FRIENDS.

Share love with all God's creatures this Christmas season! Birds (like us) need steady food sources throughout the year to survive cold nights, raise their young, migrate for the winter season. Here's one simple feeder that can easily be made with household items.

## Materials

string

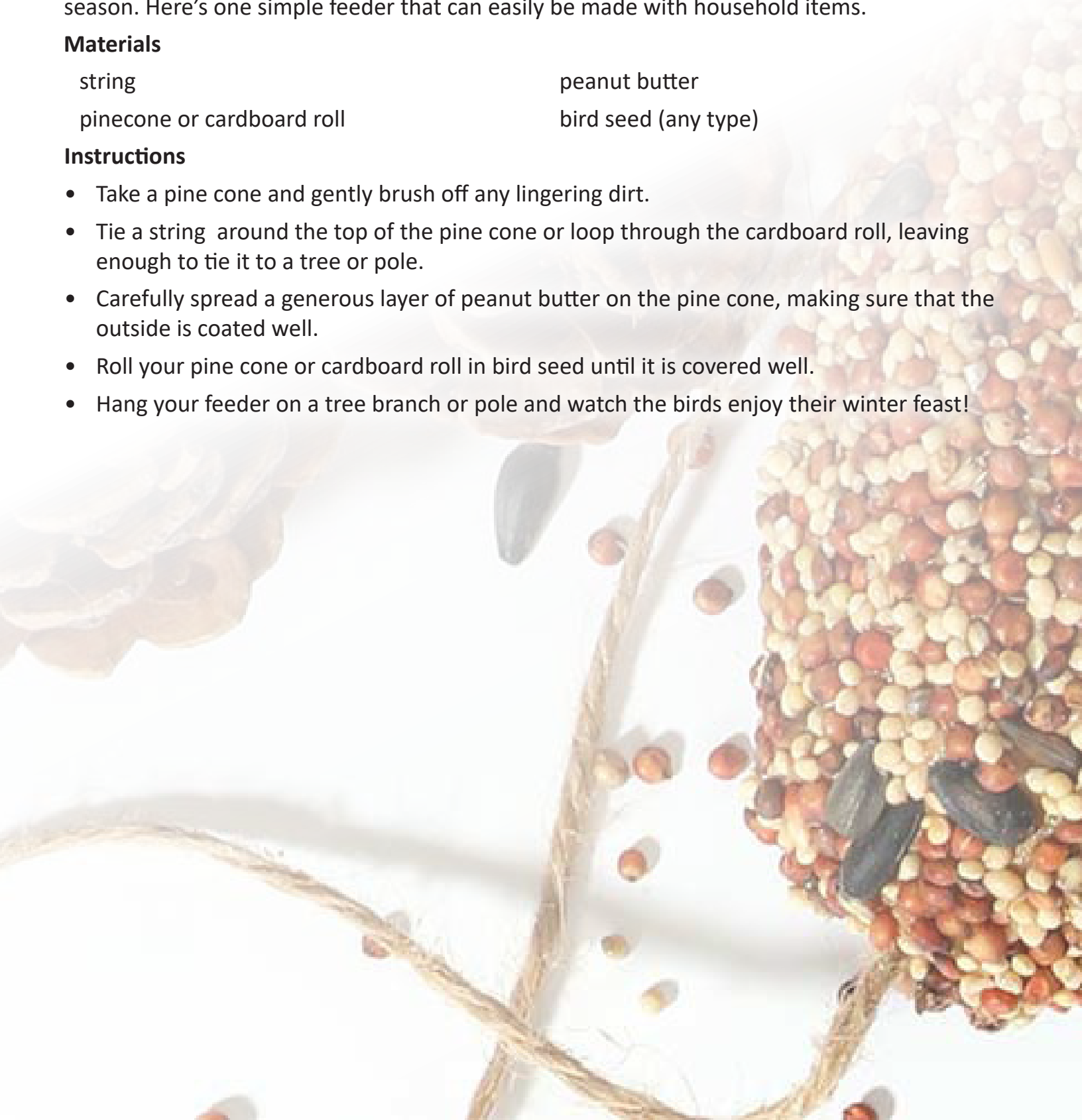
peanut butter

pinecone or cardboard roll


bird seed (any type)

## Instructions

- Take a pine cone and gently brush off any lingering dirt.
- Tie a string around the top of the pine cone or loop through the cardboard roll, leaving enough to tie it to a tree or pole.
- Carefully spread a generous layer of peanut butter on the pine cone, making sure that the outside is coated well.
- Roll your pine cone or cardboard roll in bird seed until it is covered well.
- Hang your feeder on a tree branch or pole and watch the birds enjoy their winter feast!





A top-down view of a white ceramic pot filled with water and various aromatic ingredients. The ingredients include numerous bright red cranberries, several thick slices of orange, two cinnamon sticks, and a sprig of fresh rosemary. The pot is set on a light-colored surface, and a red and white striped cloth is partially visible in the upper left corner.

# SURROUND *yourself with* the SMELLS OF CHRISTMAS.

Love those warm holiday aromas, but don't necessarily want to make another pie or batch of cookies? Create some Christmas atmosphere with a simmer pot! Simmer pots are sometimes called stovetop potpourri - a simmering stew of spices, citrus, and other delicious things to make your house smell festive.

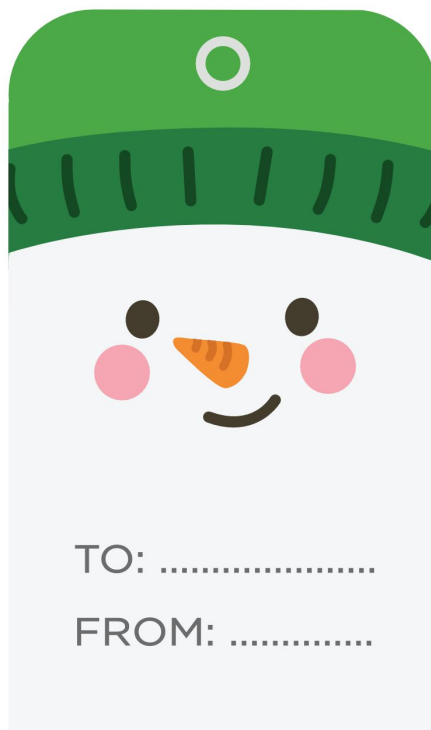
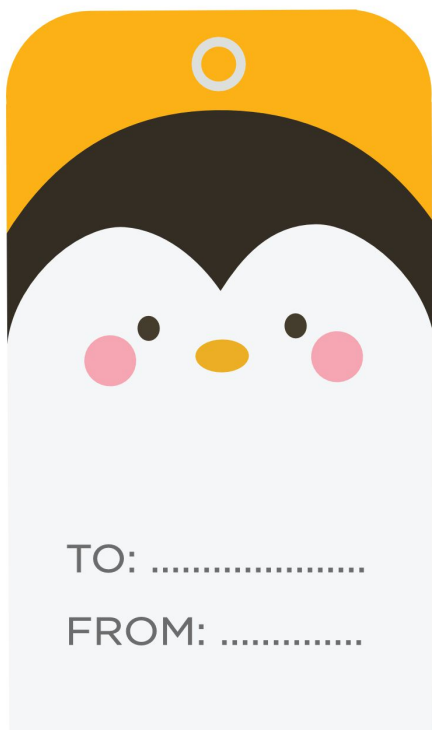
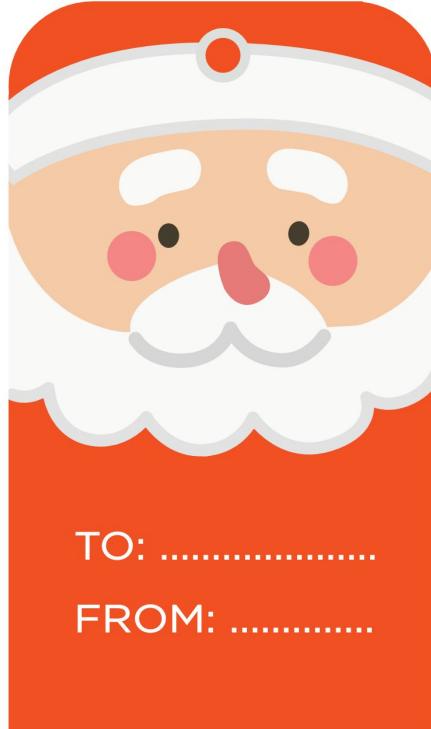
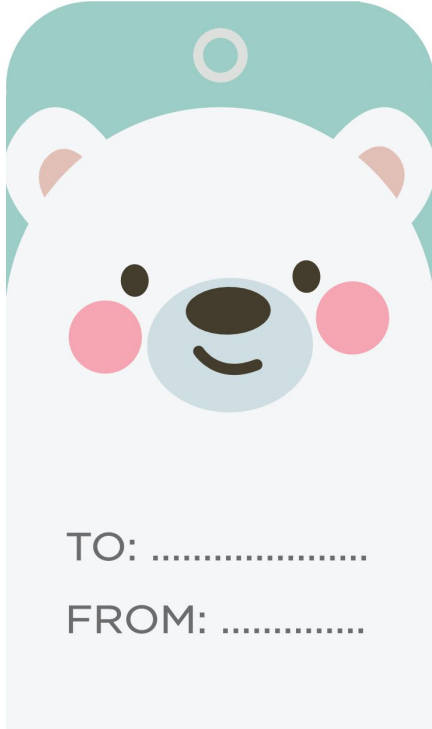
Collect one ingredient each from the following categories:

- Citrus (oranges of all varieties, grapefruit, and lemon work best)
- Cranberries (frozen or fresh, give the dried ones a pass here)
- Whole Spices (cinnamon sticks, star anise, whole cloves, etc.)
- Herbs or woody elements (bay leaves, rosemary sprigs, even pine cuttings)

Boil in a pot of water on your own stovetop, or fill a mason jar with ingredients to give to a friend!

# MAKE YOUR OWN *gift tags!*

Christmas is a time for giving gifts, but it's always better when we can add that personal touch. Collect scissors, markers or crayons, and your paper of choice to make unique gift tags for this year's presents. Use the shapes below as inspiration or a template!





# SHARE A *sweet snack* WITH FRIENDS

Whether you gift these to a loved one or keep them all to yourself (we won't judge), chocolate covered pretzel rods make a great holiday snack. Added bonus: they're fun to make for people of all ages!

## Ingredients

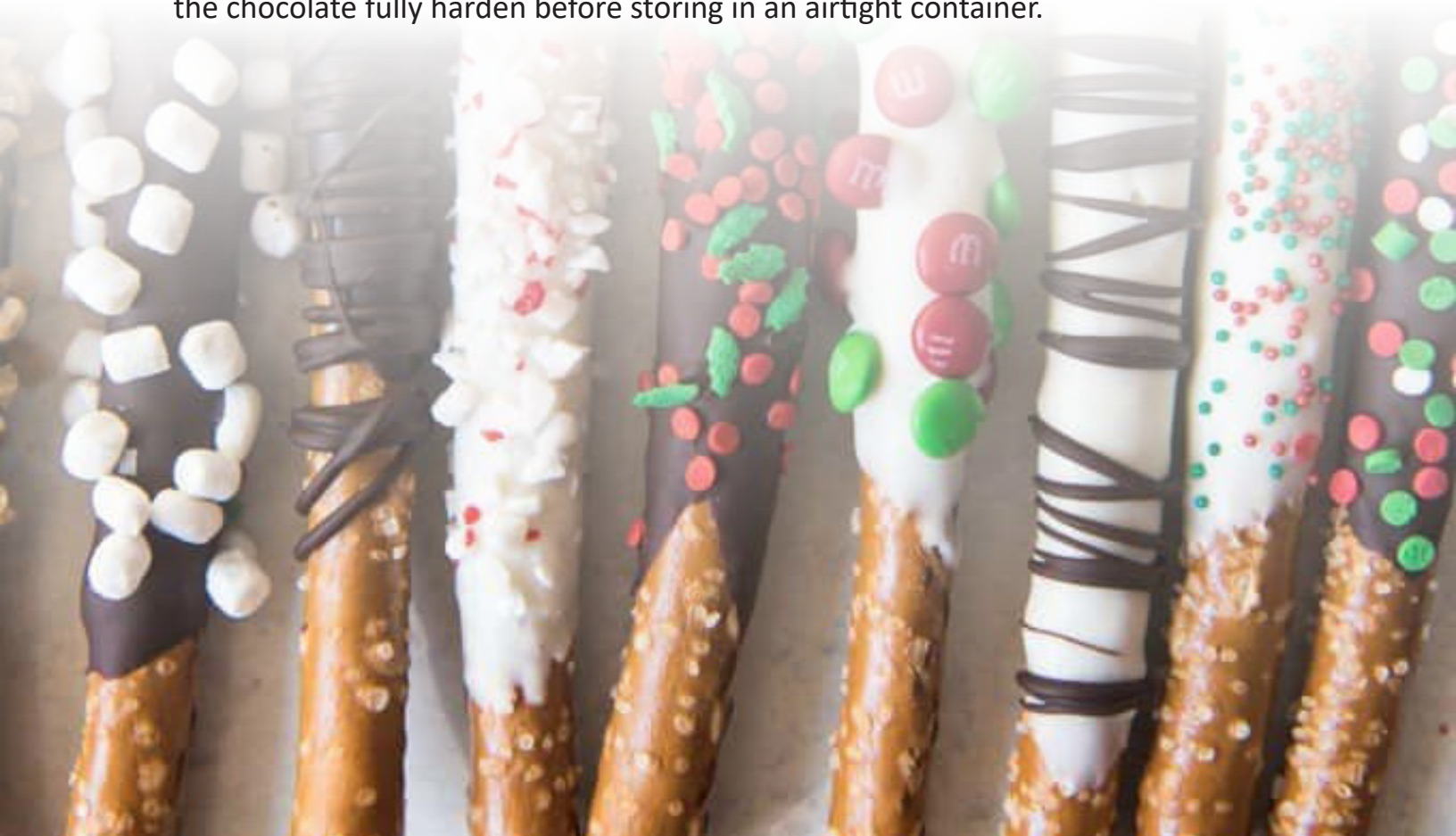
16 ounces pretzel rods

16 ounces chopped milk, semisweet, dark or white chocolate or candy melts

Sprinkles, mini M&M's, coconut, toffee bits, chopped nuts, etc.

## Instructions

- Melt the chocolate by microwaving at short, 20-second bursts, and stirring as necessary.
- Dip pretzel rods into the melted chocolate, shaking off any excess chocolate before transferring them to a parchment lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with whatever toppings you desire before the chocolate has a chance to set, then let the chocolate fully harden before storing in an airtight container.





# CHRISTMAS EVE

*at* DUNWOODY UMC



## CHRISTMAS EVE EVE

### *A Modern Christmas*

Saturday, December 23 | 7:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall  
*Family-friendly modern worship featuring contemporary carols and candle light.*

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### *Traditional Worship\**

Sunday, December 24 | 11:15 a.m. | Sanctuary  
*A service of Holy Communion held in the Sanctuary.*

## CHRISTMAS EVE

### *Family Service with Children's Choirs\**

Sunday, December 24 | 4:00 & 5:30 p.m. | Sanctuary  
*Family-friendly worship featuring candle lighting and music from DUMC's Children's Choirs.*

### *Candlelight Communion*

Sunday, December 24 | 7:00 p.m. | Sanctuary  
*A traditional service with Holy Communion, featuring music from DUMC's Youth Choir and Handbell Choir held in the Sanctuary.*

### *A Service of Lessons & Carols*

Sunday, December 24 | 9:00 p.m. | Sanctuary  
*Traditional worship rich in music and scripture, featuring choral classics and candle lighting.*

### *Candlelight Communion*

Sunday, December 24 | 11:00 p.m. | Sanctuary  
*Traditional worship with Holy Communion and candle lighting to welcome Christmas Day.*

## NEW YEAR'S EVE

### *One Worship Service*

Sunday, December 31 | 11:15 a.m. | Sanctuary

*\*Nursery Available*

*Standard worship times will resume Sunday, January 7, 2024.*