

Words of Christmas

Lord, thank you for including me
in Your Christmas story.

The shepherds heard the good news of Your birth
and spread the words around the world.

Generations later Your headlines made it
to my eyes and heart.

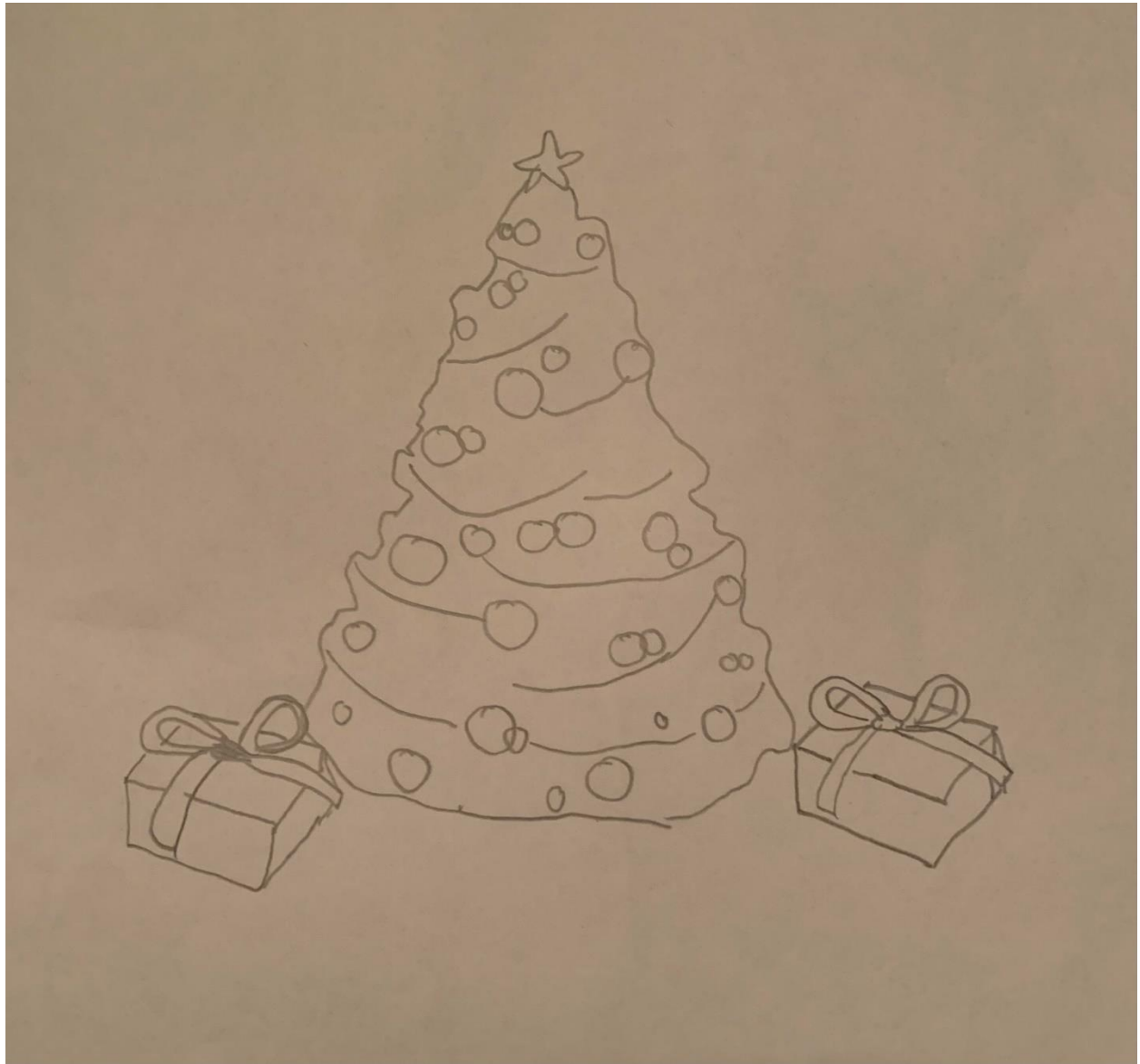
Like Mary, I often treasure up the magnitude
of the gift of Your birth, Jesus.

Sunday mornings I travel to Risen Savior
gathering with my sisters and brothers in Christ...
glorifying and praising You.

Your gifts of love, forgiveness and faithfulness
overwhelm me in joy and gratitude.

You send me into the desert, yet I'm not deserted
proclaiming Your Christmas story.

Please keep my pathway lit, centered on sharing
Your great love, causing great joy.



In All Things

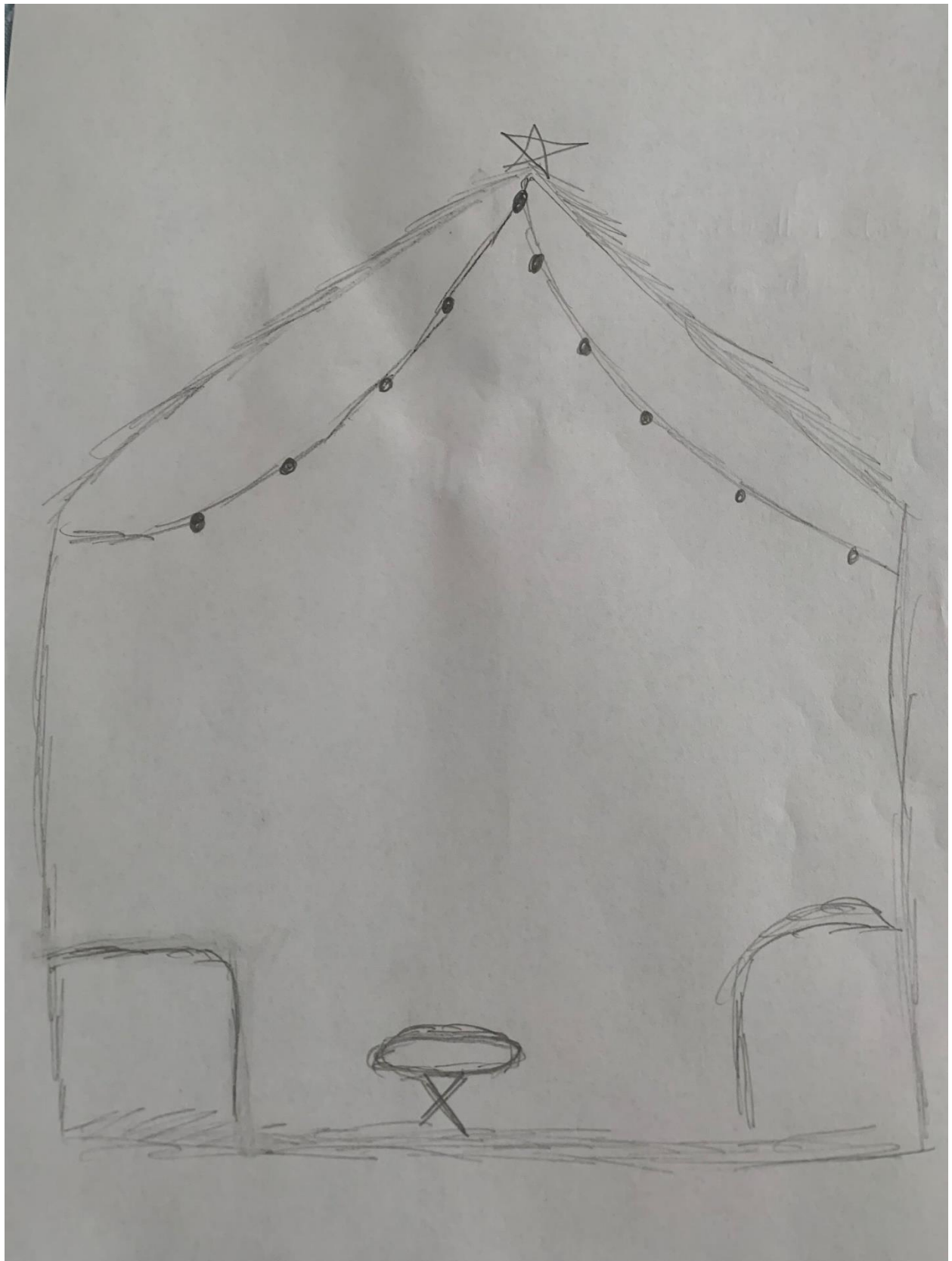
God cares and is active with you in every area of your life this season. He gives us gifts to enjoy—and the ability to enjoy them. My heart sings "Fa la la la la la la la la!"

"...And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way."

Colossians 3:17 (MSG)

December 1st Reflection:

What is your favorite Christmas song? What is your earliest memory singing this song?



The Nativity Lights

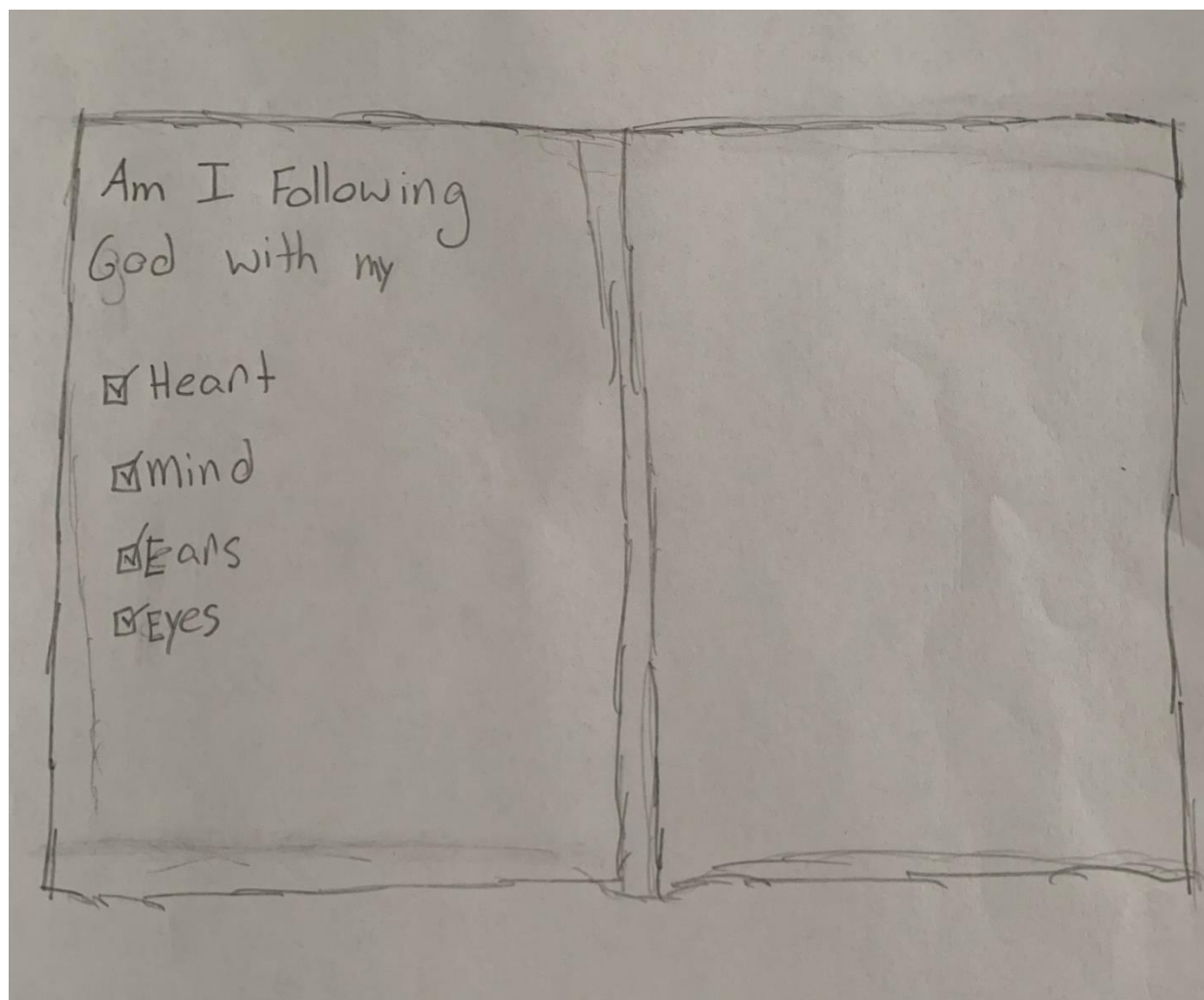
As I stroll through my neighborhood at dusk,
Christmas lights begin flickering on.
I see Santa, Mrs. Claus, working elves,
a polar bear, a snowman, a fawn.
I see trees through frosted glass windows,
I feel a chill and let out a yawn.
It's time to head back, yet my heart must see,
my favorite lights out of all the lawns.
It's glowing, it's there. I walk faster.
The nativity! My soul is again drawn.
The scene welcomes all who wander,
the light of baby Jesus will always be on.

“With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.”

Psalms 119:10 (NIV)

December 2nd Reflection:

Do you have a Christmas lights tradition?



See What I See

In the famous Christmas song, "Do You Hear What I Hear", we sing the lyrics: "Do You Hear What I Hear?", "Do You See What I See?" and "Do You Know What I Know?"

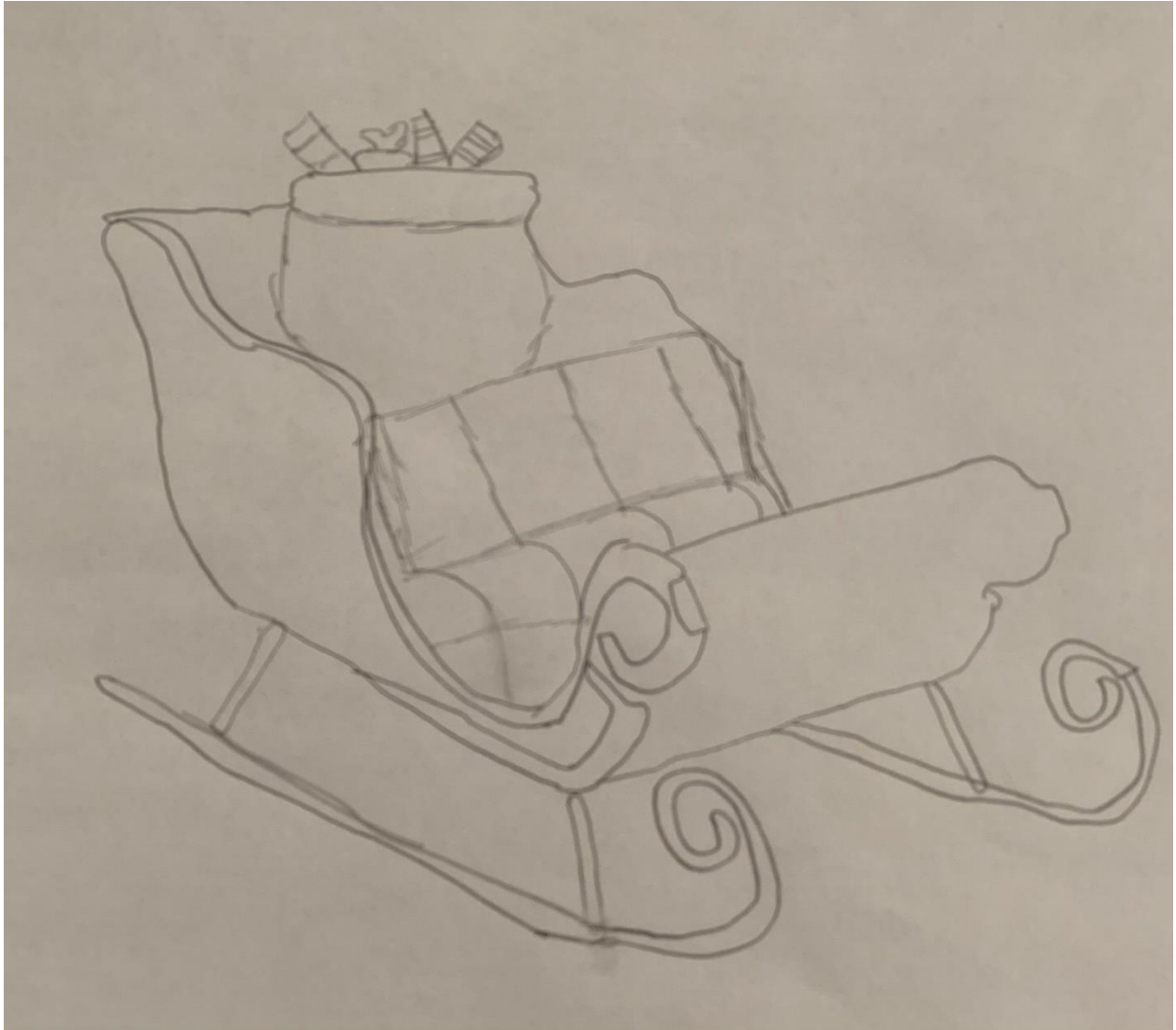
Lord, My Christmas list grows longer as the days draw closer for celebrating Your birth. In the midst of checking off my to-do's, I don't want to miss Your important messages for my ears, eyes, mind and heart. I am listening, I am looking, and I am open.

"Ears that hear and eyes that see-the Lord has made them both."

Proverbs 20:12 (NIV)

December 3rd Reflection:

Spend some time with God asking Him what He wants you to hear, see and learn from Him this season.



Sleigh Ride

As my sleigh ride of life approaches the end of the year, I feel a bit queasy. The hills of COVID-19 are slippery. The pivots in life's circumstances are topsy-turvy. The descents of emotions are a mixture of grief and gratitude. Thankfully God promises to snuggle up with me and take the remainder of the ride with me. Thankfully He has been with me all along. God is with you too. He understands the ups and downs of life's journey and is present in our myriad of thoughts, emotions and feelings. Knowing this helps me sing the lyrics in the Christmas song "Sleigh Ride", "Come on, it's lovely weather for a sleigh ride together with you."

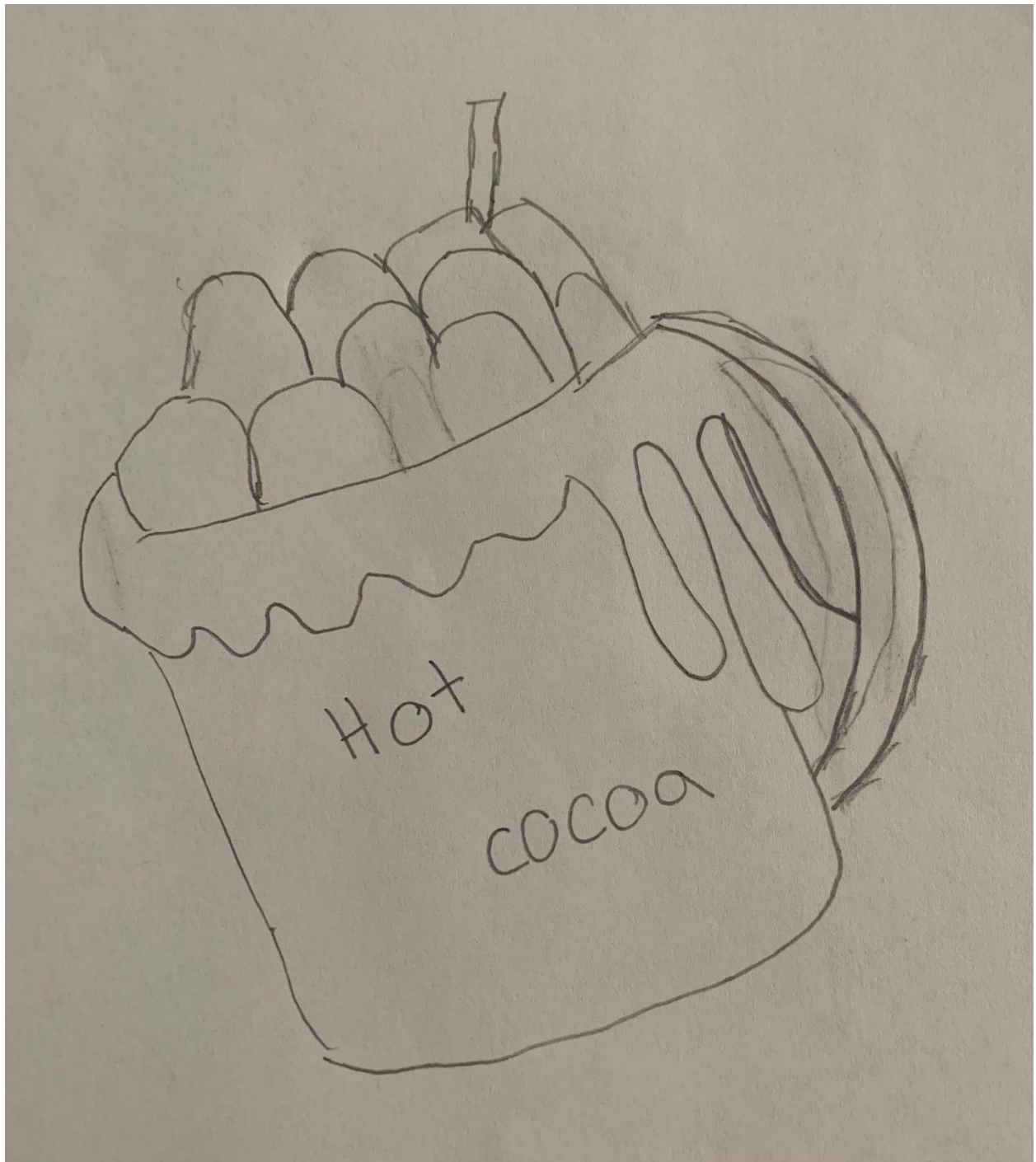
*Lord, Thank You for being with me as I zigzag my way through the remainder of the year.
Overall, I am thankful for the ride because I know You are leading my sleigh.*

"...For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

December 4th Reflection:

Spend some time with God identifying your feelings from this year's sleigh ride of life circumstances. Allowing yourself this time can benefit you in the days, months, and seasons to come. Then you'll know what you're dealing with...and what you can pray about...and what you are grateful for...and what kind of help you can ask for...and where to reduce your unrealistic expectations and offer yourself a break.



Time for Hot Cocoa while...

Clearing fresh snow
Poking crackling logs
Running holiday errands
Hanging glass ornaments
Addressing picture cards
Fluffing pine branches
Crafting mantle decorations
Reading Advent devotions
Discovering light displays
Planning neighborhood gatherings
Watching Chiefs football
Glazing cinnamon buns
Looping fancy ribbons
Frosting cut-out cookies
Binging traditional movies
Turning story pages
Arranging Nativity scenes

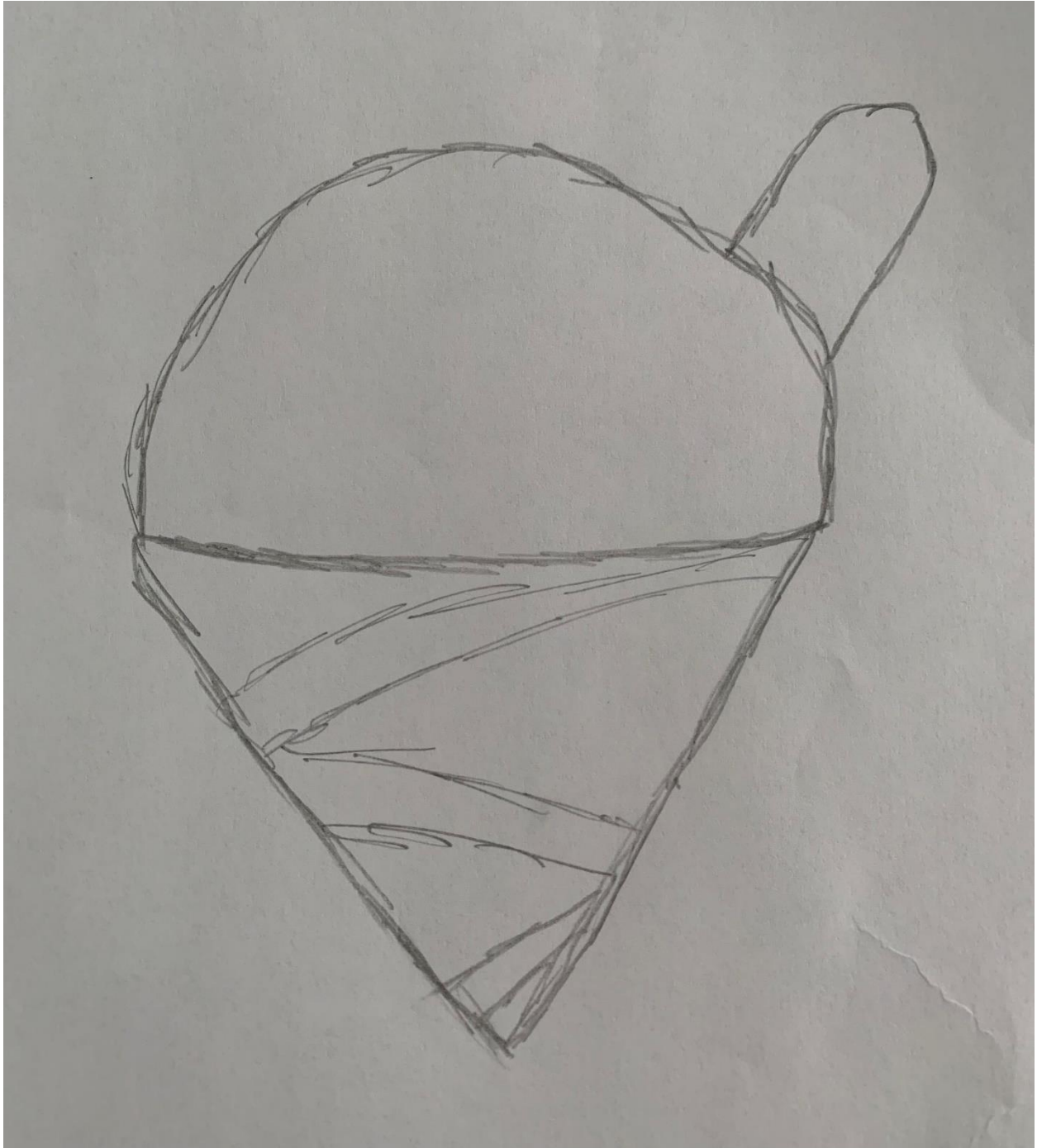
Lord, as I sip on a cup of hot cocoa, thoughts of Your overflowing goodness fill my heart with gratitude.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him."

Psalms 34:8 (NIV)

December 5th Reflection:

Make a cup of hot cocoa and sip over thoughts of God's goodness in your life.



Recipe for Christmas Cheer

2 cups of Fresh Snow

1 can of Coca-Cola

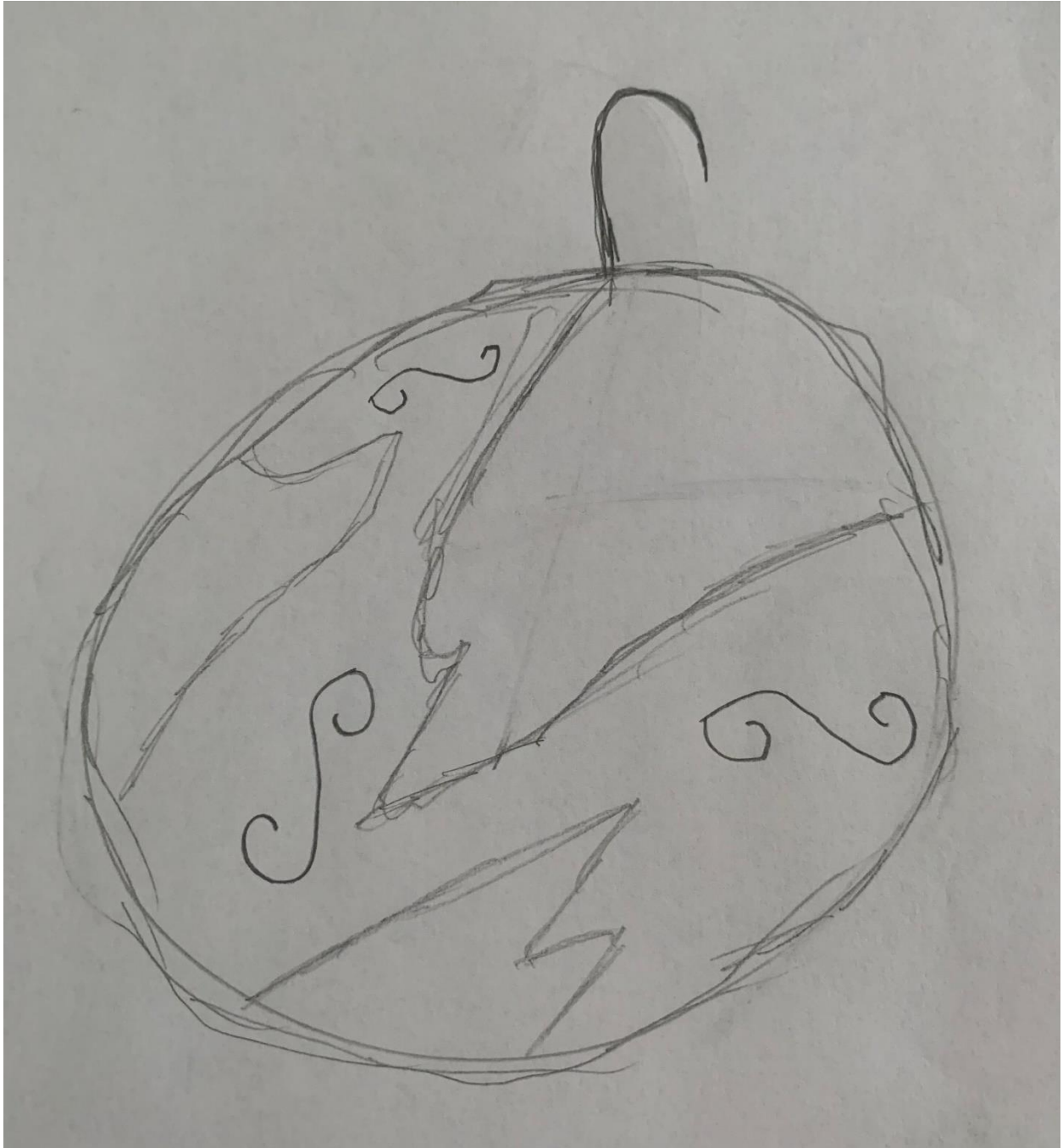
1 large Straw

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Psalm 16:11 (NIV)

December 6th Reflection:

What are the ingredients in your *Recipe for Christmas Cheer*?



My Ornament Story

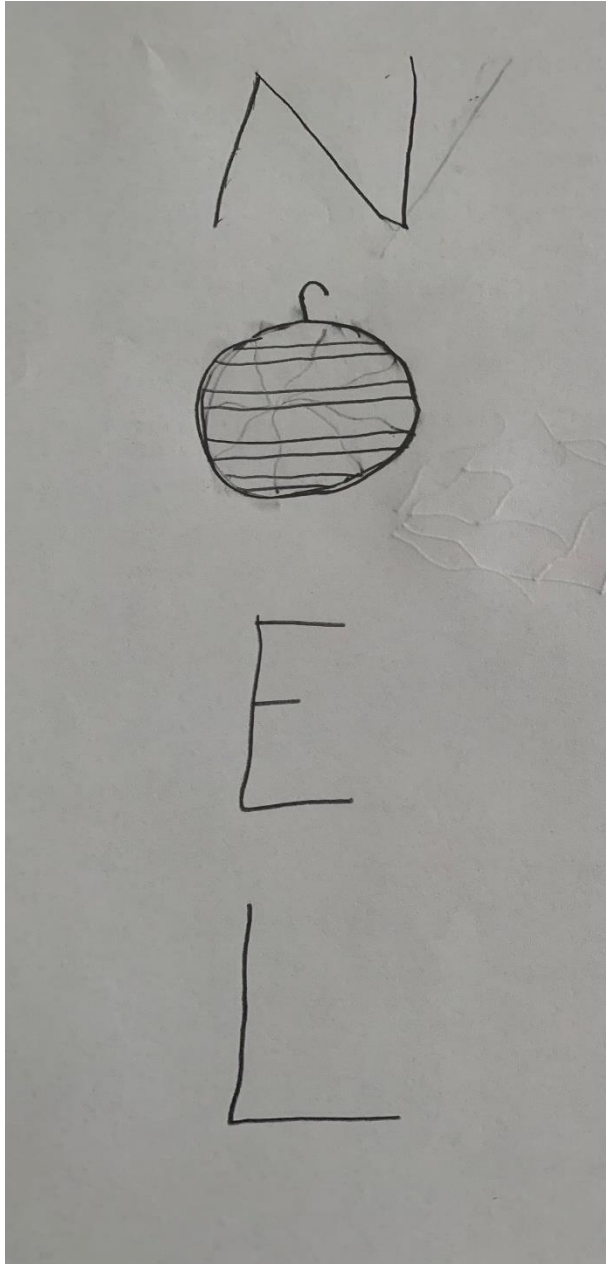
Some ornaments old
Some ornaments new
A knitted one
A stitched one
Pictures with glitter and glue
A 21-year Anniversary
Four Daughters
A Dog-Molly Lu
A Rescue Kitten
Hobbies
Vacations
Angels-a slew
Silver Ribbon
White Flowers
Baubles of Blue

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.”

Isaiah 11:1-3 (NIV)

December 7th Reflection:

How would you describe the ornaments on your Christmas tree?



Noel

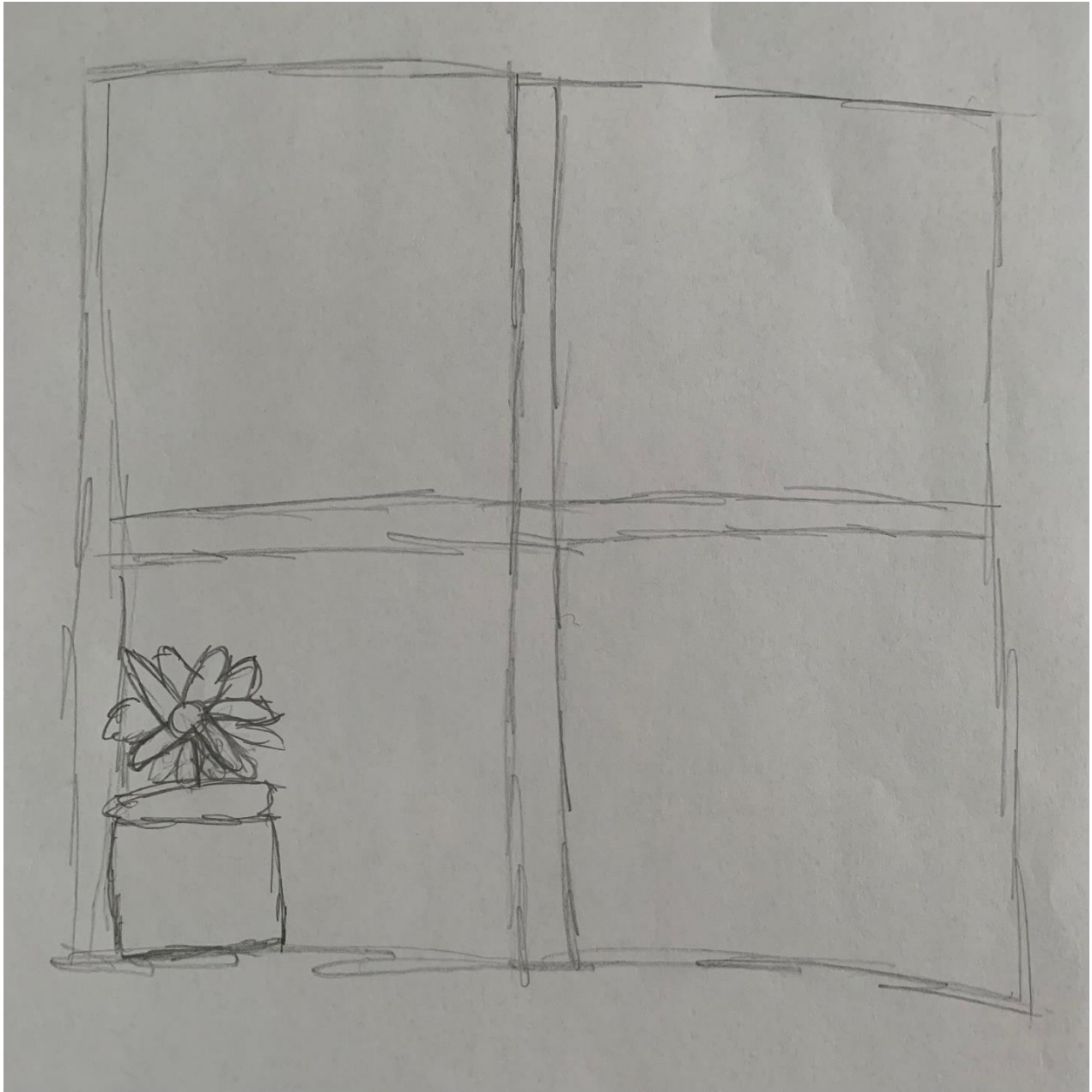
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Luke 2:11 (NIV)

December 8th Reflection:

What Christmassy words spring up in your heart during Advent?



A Poinsettia's Hope

Waiting is hard on the chilly windowsill.

I see masked beggars shuffling down the sidewalk.

I hear snow removal vehicles driving around the square.

Fluorescent "Open" signs begin turning on.

The kind florist gives me a drink.

She whispers, "You're created to do good things."

It's a new day!

My job is harder than ever this year.

Patrons place orders for funeral flowers.

Weddings are cancelled because of something called COVID-19.

Most afternoons are very lonely.

Today I wake from my nap to a young girl pointing at me with one hand, tugging at her grandfather's pant leg with the other hand saying,

"That's a pretty one!"

Her grandfather replies,

"The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought of as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent His purity."

The child picks me up and holds me the entire way home.

Her grandfather says, "Place it near the window where the sun comes in. I want all of our neighbors to see the Christmas plant of Hope."

I say to myself, "This must be what the florist meant when she said, "You're created to do good things!"

I try to be patient.

I am faithful in prayer.

Now I get to spread Hope everywhere!

I will do it with joy!

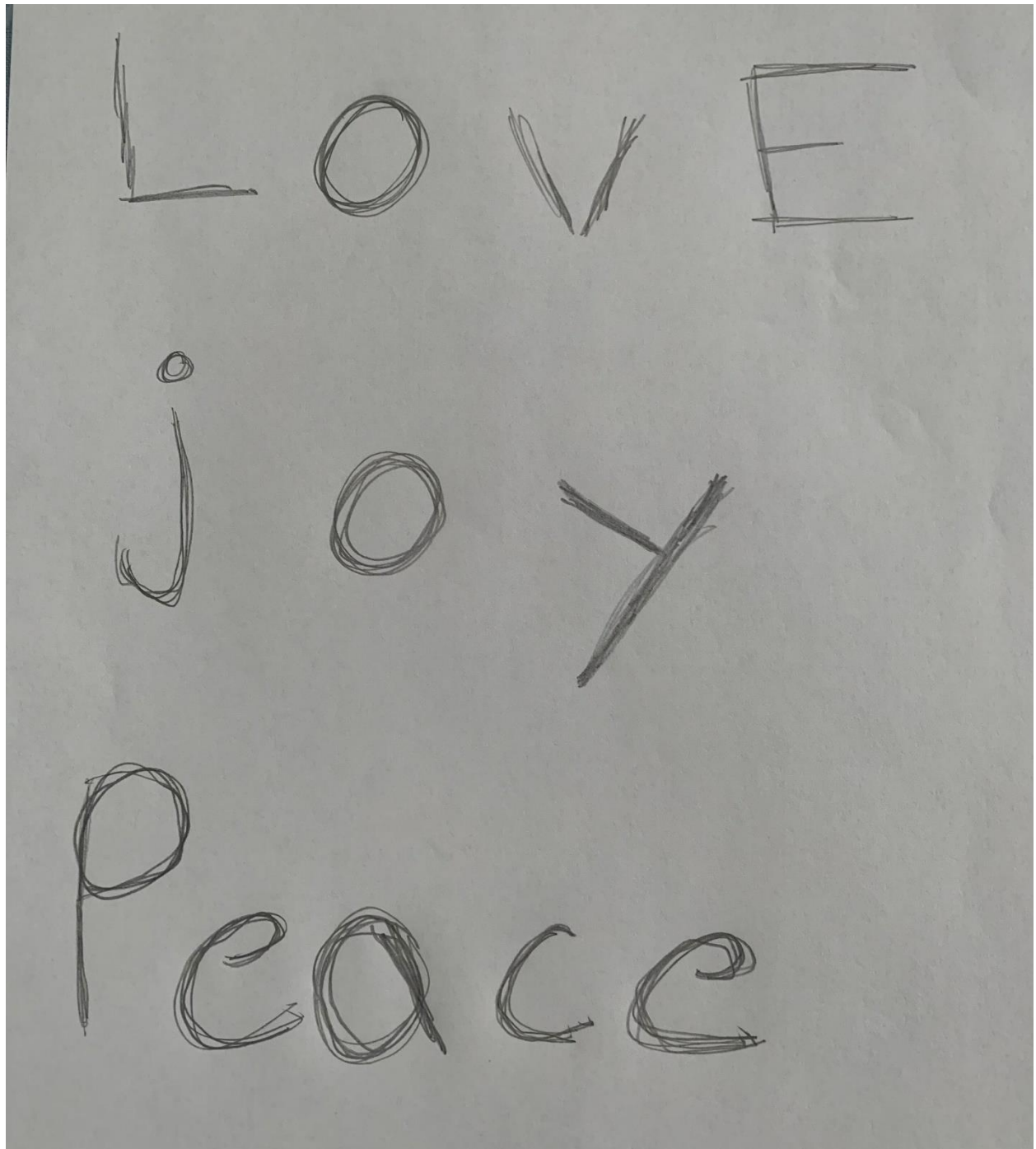
Lord, thank you for creating me to do good things. I feel the sun shining on my face and Your presence in every detail of my life! This season please help me remain joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Romans 12:12 (NIV)

December 9th Reflection:

Where might you lean into God's help this season to live out a greater measure of joy in hope, patience in affliction and faithfulness in prayer?



Christmas Blessing

May you know the
Joy that comes
from His Love
filling you with Peace.

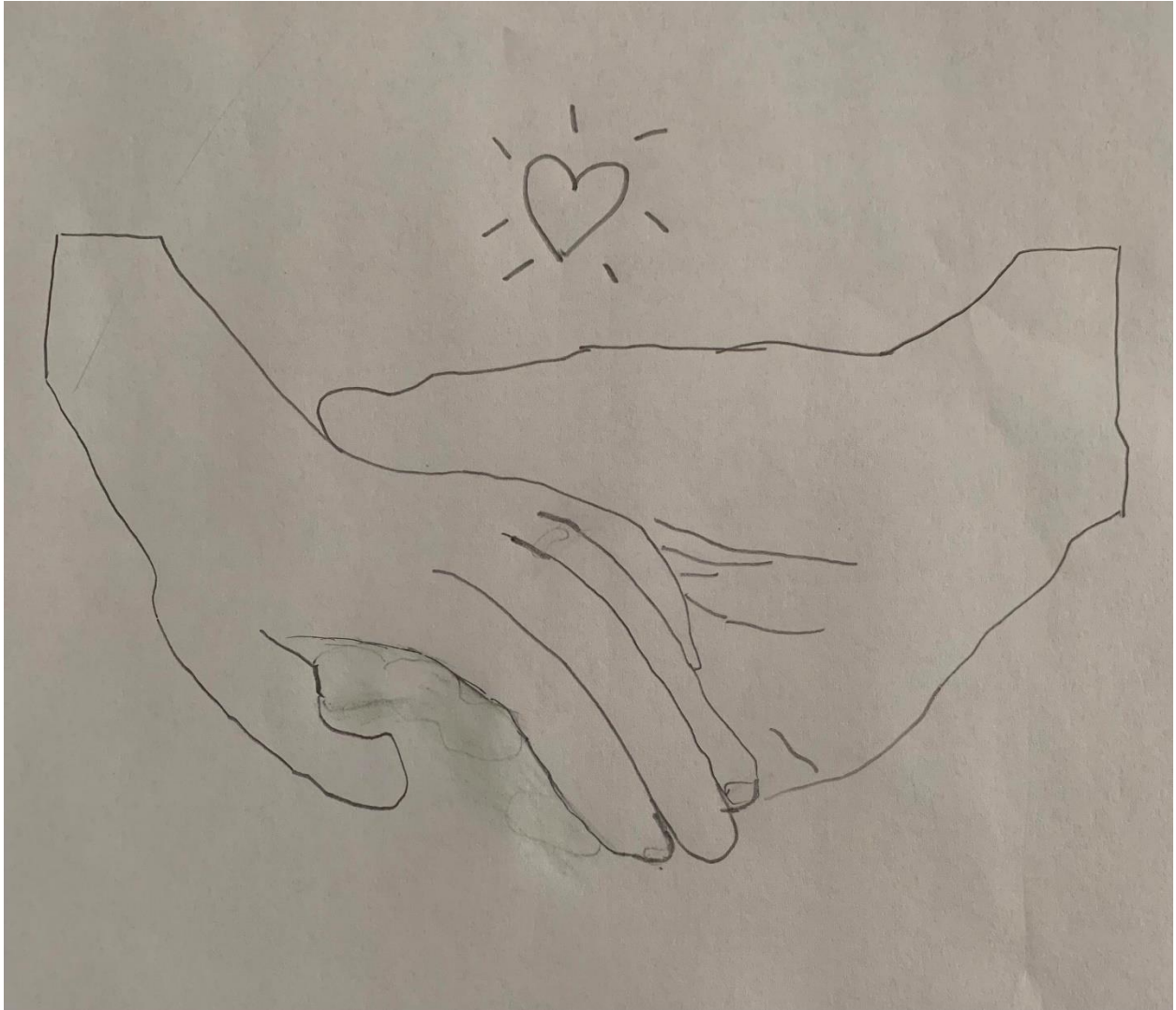
Lord, Thank you for Your gifts this season. Your Love brings me Joy and fills me with Peace. As I spend time adoring Your gifts, my breath deepens, and smile grows.

"Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love."

2 John 1:3 (NIV)

December 10th Reflection:

Spend some time with God asking Him to fill up any deflated space in your circumstances with His breath of Love, Joy and Peace.



O Holy Night

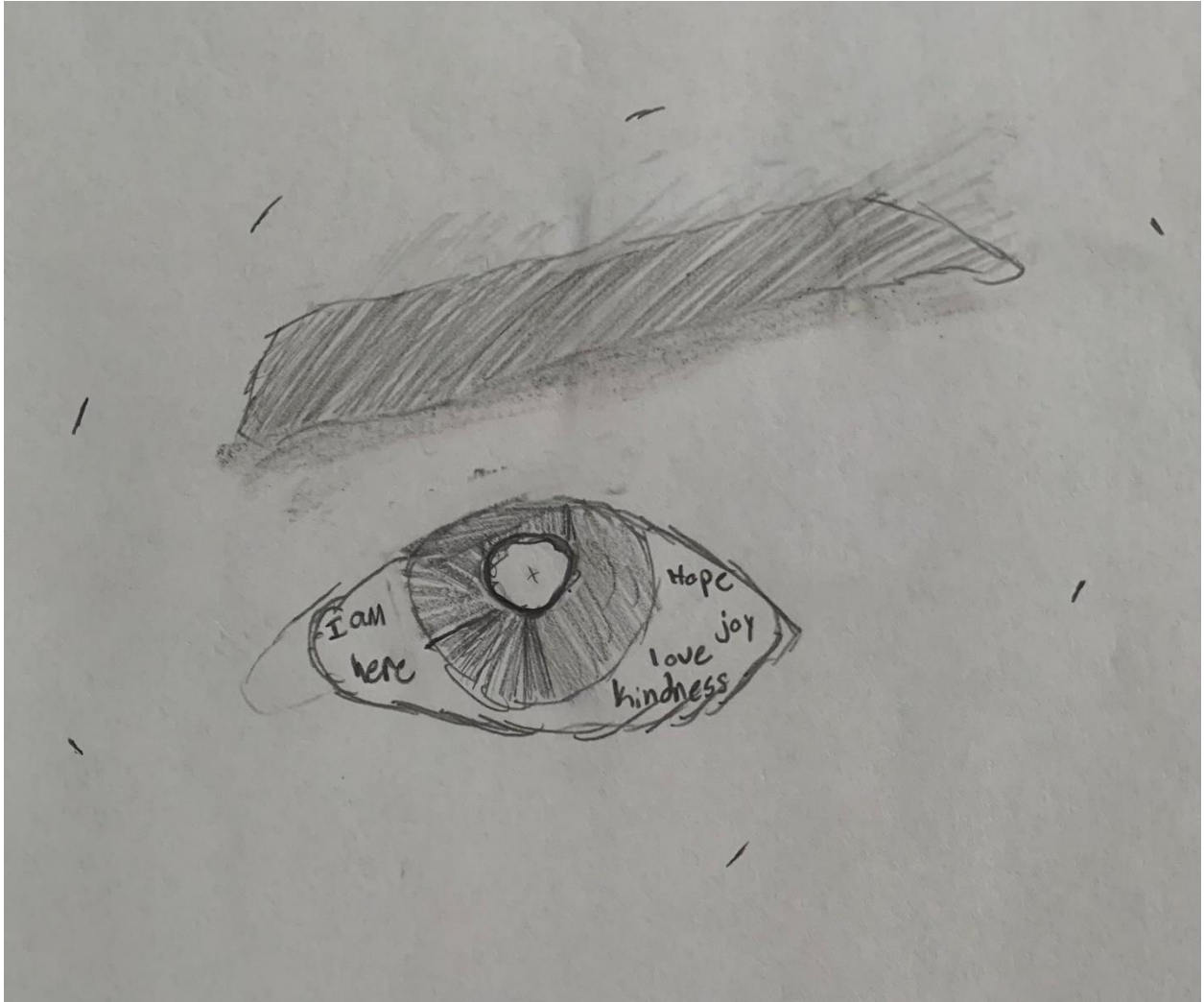
The stars shone bright
Our Savior was born
He appeared
Hope was the feeling
The world rejoiced
I am falling on my knees
I hear the angel voices
Christ lives in me
What a glorious night
He teaches me how to love
His law is Love
His gospel is Peace
He breaks my chains
I raise my voice
Let all within me praise His Holy Name!
Christ is the Lord
Forever I will praise Him!
To Him be the power and glory, forevermore!

"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:5-7 (NIV)

December 11th Reflection:

How might the Holy Night when Jesus was born influence the choices you make today? God wants to help you. To your weaknesses He is no stranger. Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!



Masks

These days it's even harder to see one another behind our masks. I am thankful we can still look into one another's eyes. Even with masks, we can still see a child's eyes light up in wonderment of Christmas magic. We can still see a brother and sister in Christ eyes light up in awe of Christmas miracles. We can still see a neighbor's eyes produce tears over loss. We can still see a co-workers eyes reveal concern, a homeless person's eyes convey defeat, a shut-in's eyes express loneliness, a nurse's eyes display care, a teacher's eyes communicate perseverance, a mailman's eyes exhibit determination and a pastor's eyes proclaim hope.

Lord, it's oftentimes hard to really know what those around me are going through and it's especially so these days when half our face is covered with masks. When I miss seeing someone else's needs, I know You see them fully and are ready to help. I see You Lord. Please give me eyes to see others the way You see them and help me see beyond my circumstances this Christmas.

"Jesus answered:...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

John 14:9 (NIV)

December 12th Reflection:

Who is God nudging you to see more authentically this season? What's one question you might ask them to express your desire for knowing them with greater understanding.



Christmas-time aromas

I smell the aromas distinctive to Christmas-time in my home...

Fresh cut tree candles

Cinnamon pine cones

Simmering potpourri

Candy canes

Hot cocoa

Gingerbread houses

Peanut butter balls

Butterscotch haystacks

Colored sprinkles

White chocolate peppermint candy

Firewood

Paper white plant

Rosemary plant

Apple cider

Prime rib

Honey croissants

Cheesy potatoes

Cinnamon rolls

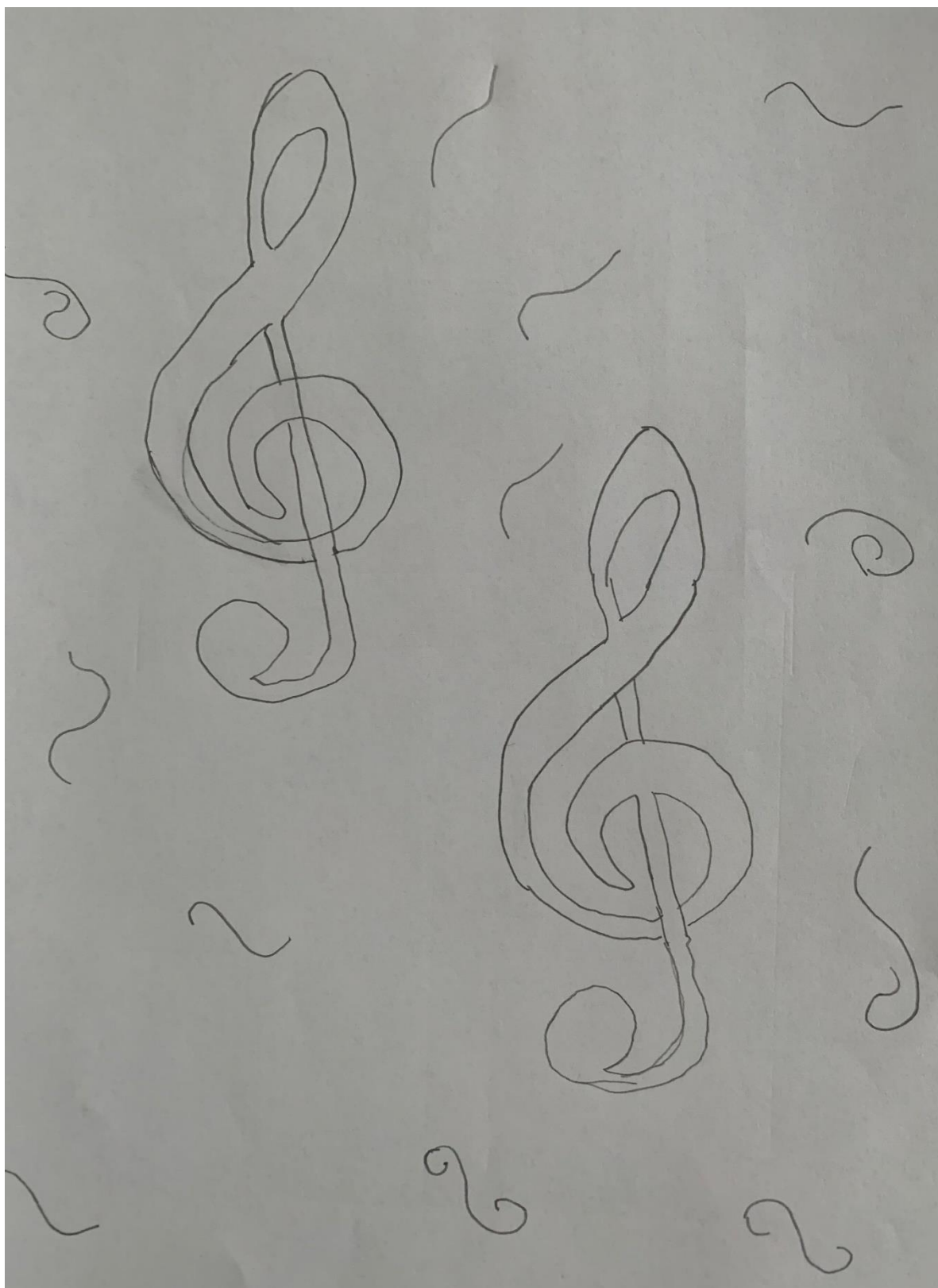
Breakfast casserole

“In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent with life...”

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 (MSG)

December 13th Reflection:

What Christmastime aromas fill the air of your surroundings?



Come let us adore Him

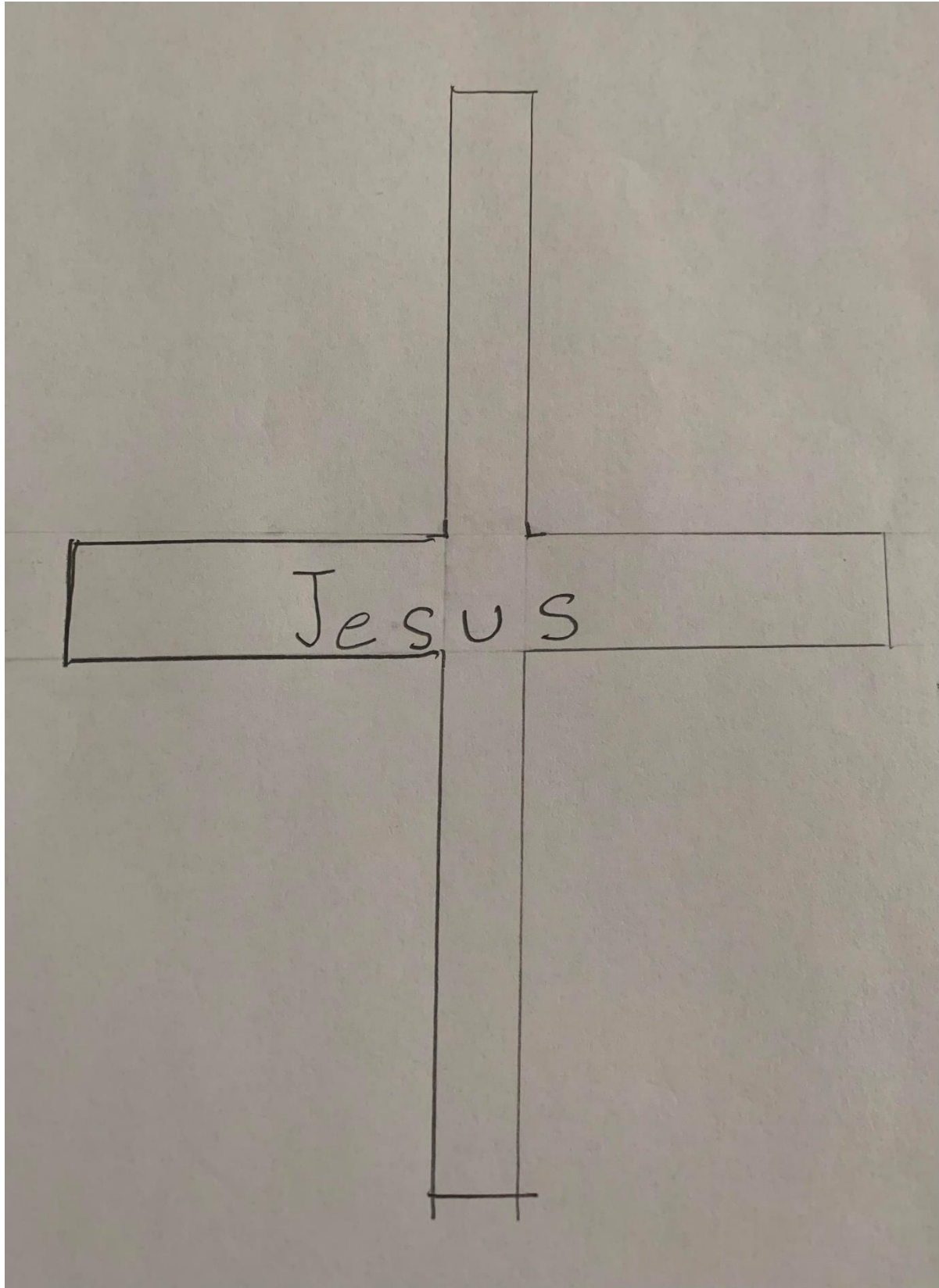
Some synonyms for the word Adore are Revere, Love, Cherish and Worship.

*"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song."*

Psalms 95:1-2 (NIV)

December 14th Reflection:

How might you outwardly demonstrate your internal feelings of adoration towards Jesus?



God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

I remember You, my savior,
were born on Christmas Day,
to save me from Satan's pow'r,
when I go astray.
You bring me tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy, comfort and joy.

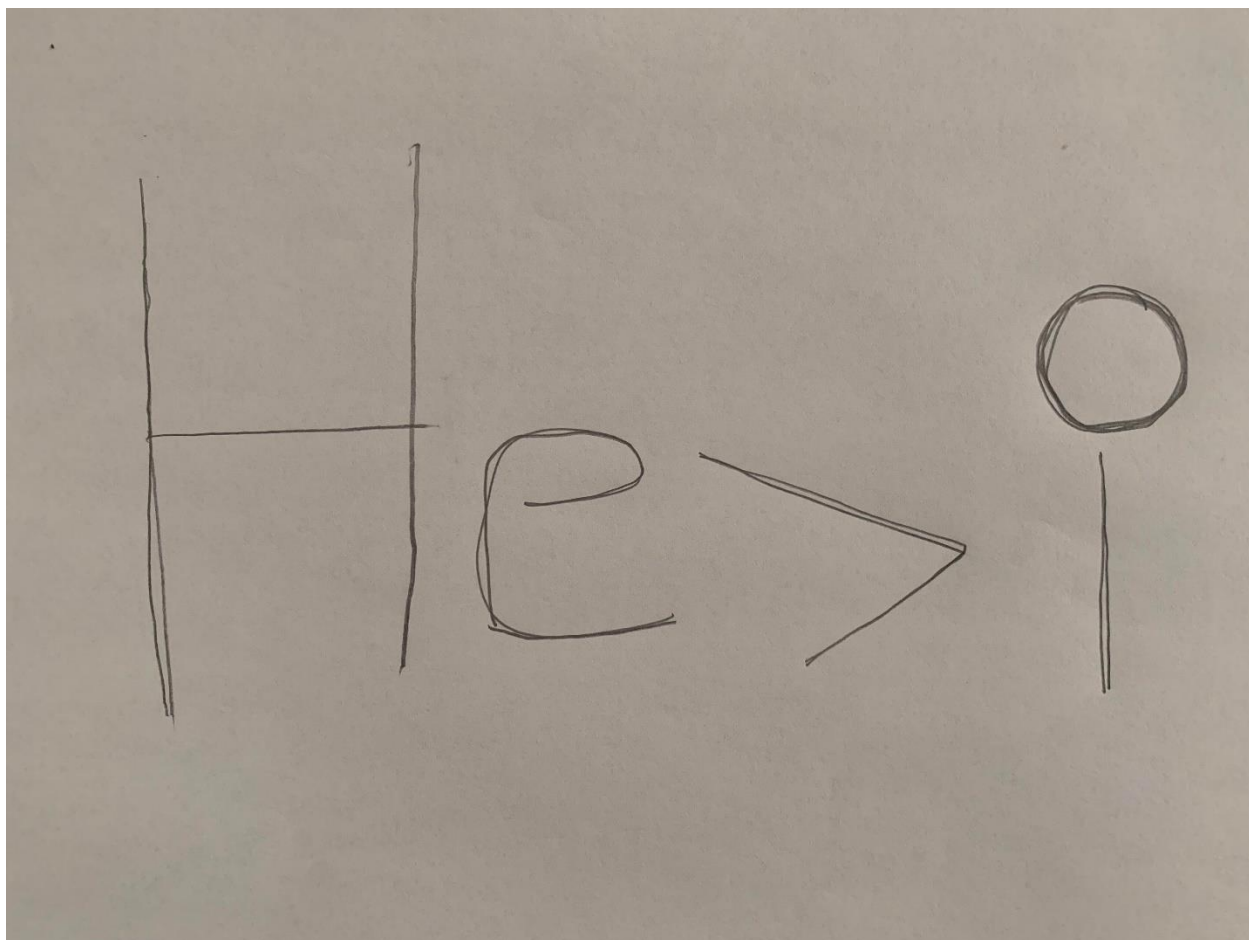
Lord, Thank you for Your compassion in all my troubles this season. Thank you too for the angelic people in my life who bring messages of comfort and joy. Please help me spread Your kindness to those on my path.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ."

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (NIV)

December 15th Reflection:

Share with God where you need an extra measure of His comfort this season. He is with you and understands all your desires.



JOY

J-Jesus

O-Over

Y-You

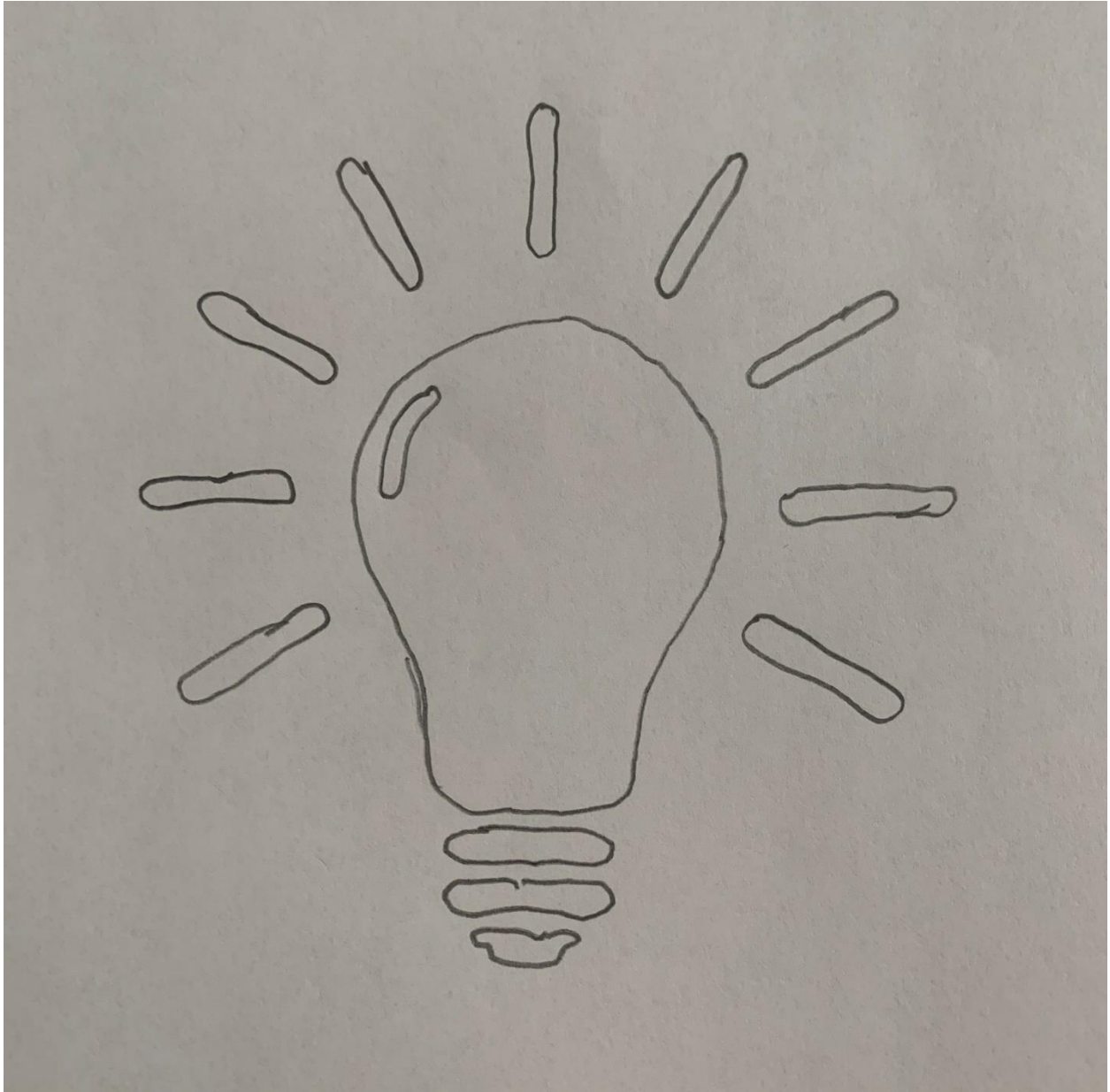
God Himself is in your midst,
saving you from your sins,
rejoicing over you with gladness,
quieting you by His love and
exulting over you with loud singing.

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."

Zephaniah 3:17 (ESV)

December 16th Reflection:

Jesus's presence covers you like a warm blanket made from fibers of His mercy, grace, love and joy. How does this help your joy meter?



Light of Hope

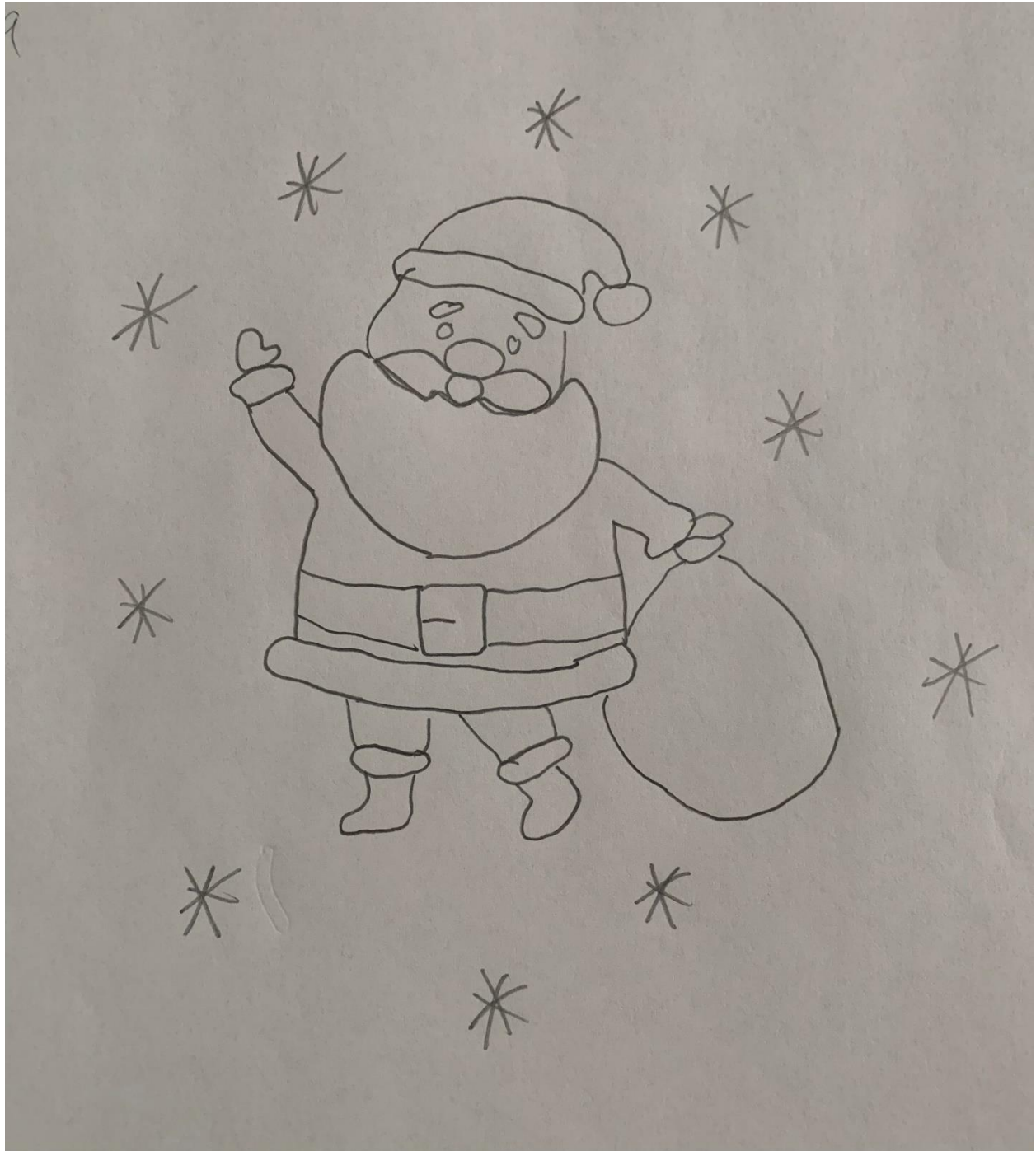
No matter how dim my circumstances
Your light shines glorious rays of hope.
When schedules battle for priority
You gently guide my next steps.
When anxieties steal my breath
You oxygenate me with Your promises.
When defeating mindsets creep in
You whisper who I am in You.
When insecurities trip my intentions,
You renew my strength and courage.
You are the Light of the World!
You illuminate my path!

"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

John 1:4-5 (NIV)

December 17th Reflection:

Invite God to illuminate your pathways with His Light of Hope.



Christmas Glee

Author Clement Clarke Moore wrote, "Twas The Night Before Christmas." The rhyme in Moore's poem still causes me to giggle today. Here are a few of my favorite lines:

"He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;"

"A joyful heart is good medicine..."

Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)

December 18th Reflection:

Think of a laughter-filled memory from a former Christmas. Whose season could you brighten by sharing the merriment?



Full Heart

Lord, thank you for this new day and for all the gifts surrounding me. You bring gladness to my heart!

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Psalms 118:24 (ESV)

December 19th Reflection:

Set a timer for one minute and shout with jubilation all your blessings.



Eyes Open

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.”

Luke 2:1-3 (NIV)

December 20th Reflection:

In your devotion time, write a few words or sentences describing the first time you heard the Christmas story.



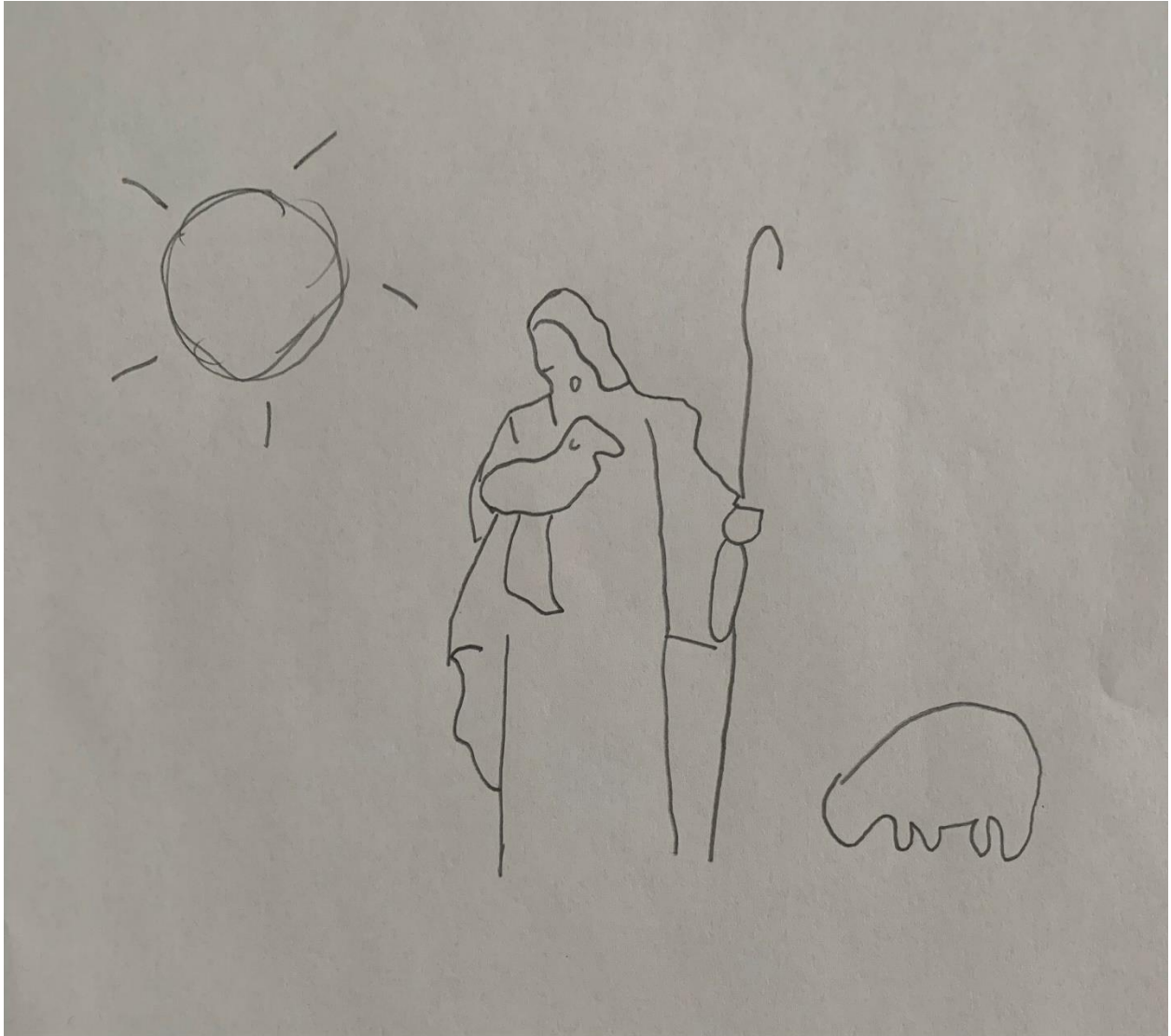
Shine Your Light

“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”

Luke 2:4-7 (NIV)

December 21st Reflection:

Mary had wonderment. Joseph was devoted. The angels experienced jubilation. The shepherds had fervor and the magi a sense of purpose. Choose one-to-two-character descriptions that you'd like to emulate and journal how you might partner with God this season to grow in these areas.



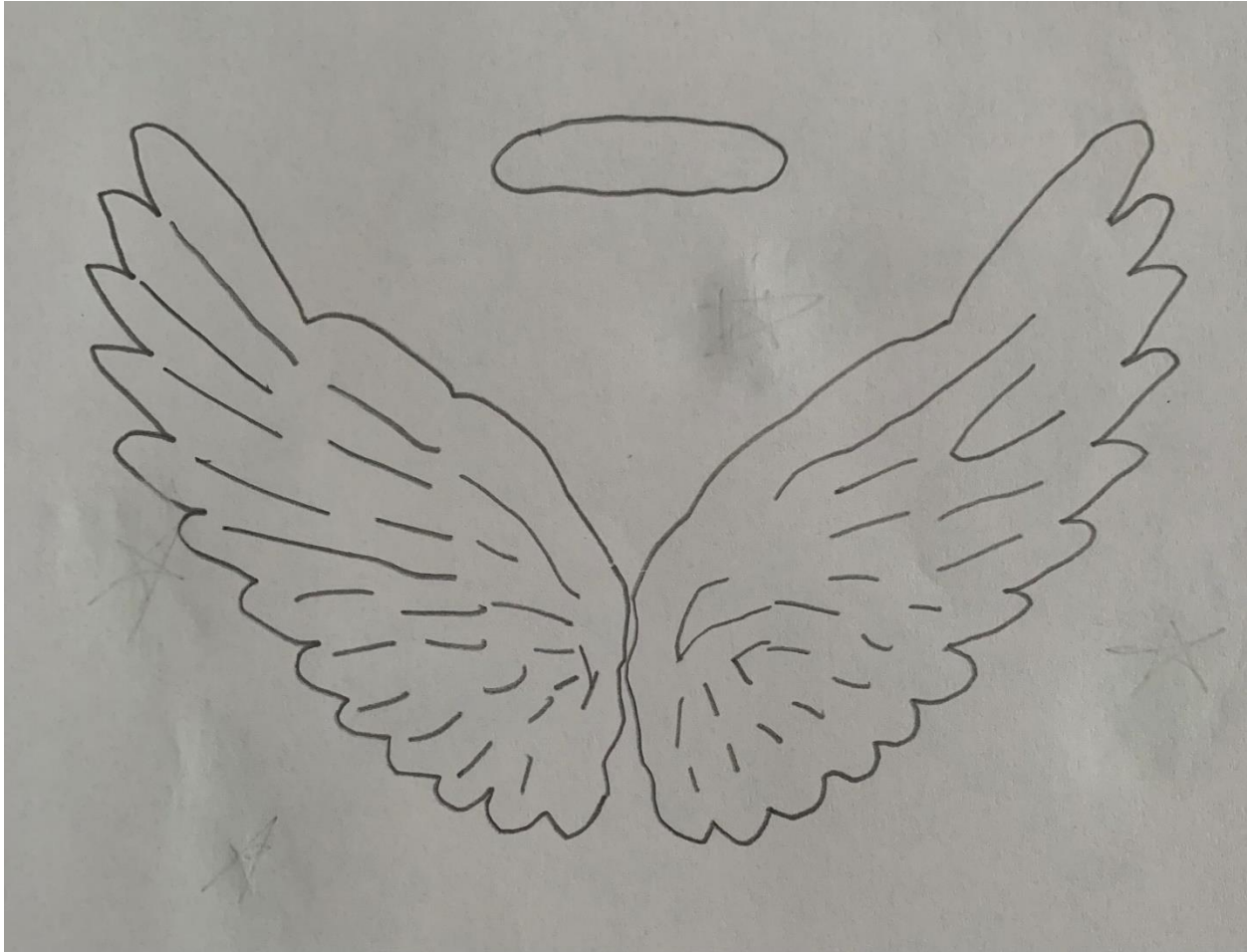
God Help Me

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:8-12(NIV)

December 22nd Reflection:

What would you like to ask God’s help with in proclaiming the Christmas story with others?



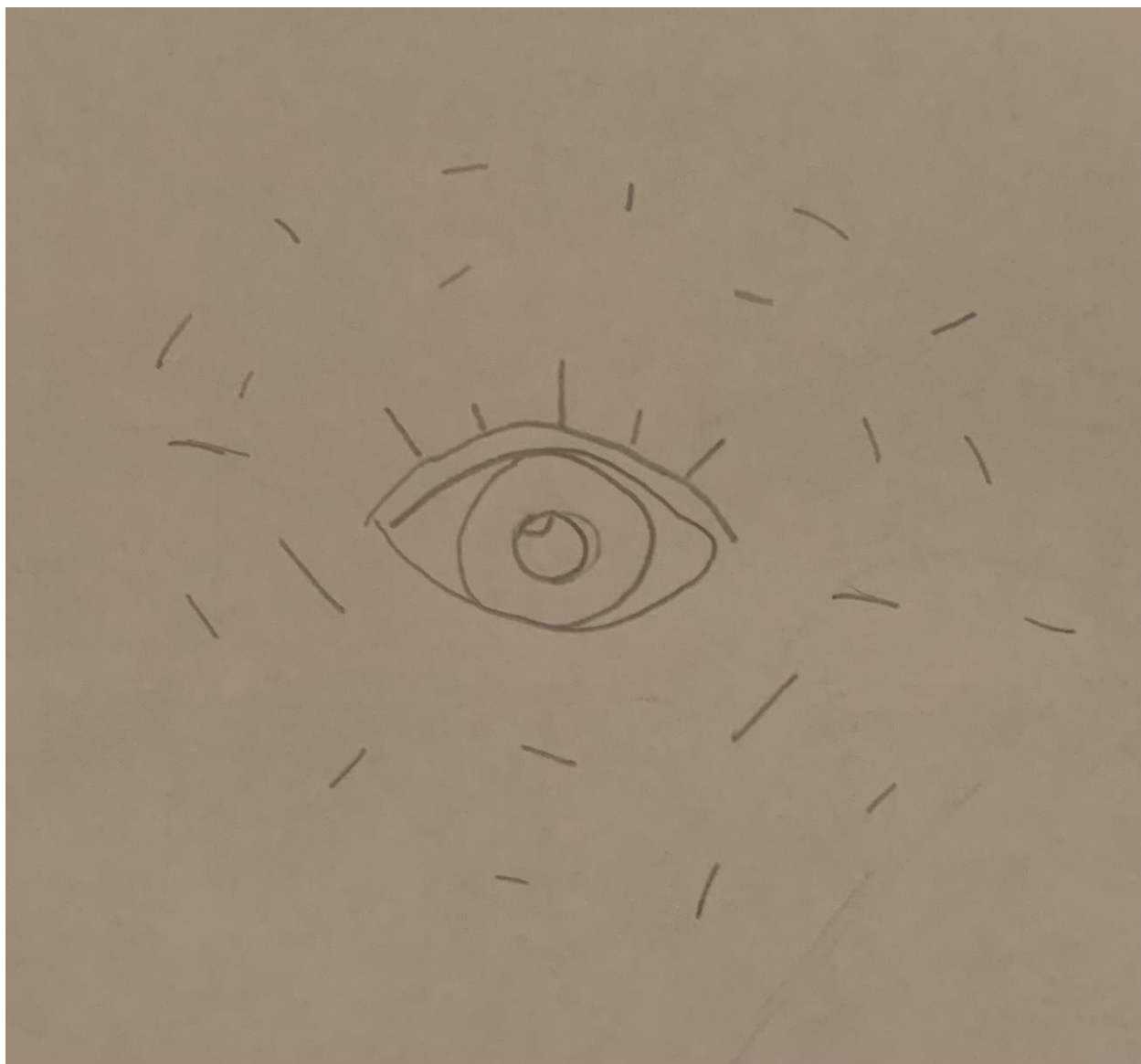
Sharing God's Love

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'"

Luke 2:13-15 (NIV)

December 23rd Reflection:

With whom do you sense God is inviting you to recount His Christmas story this season?



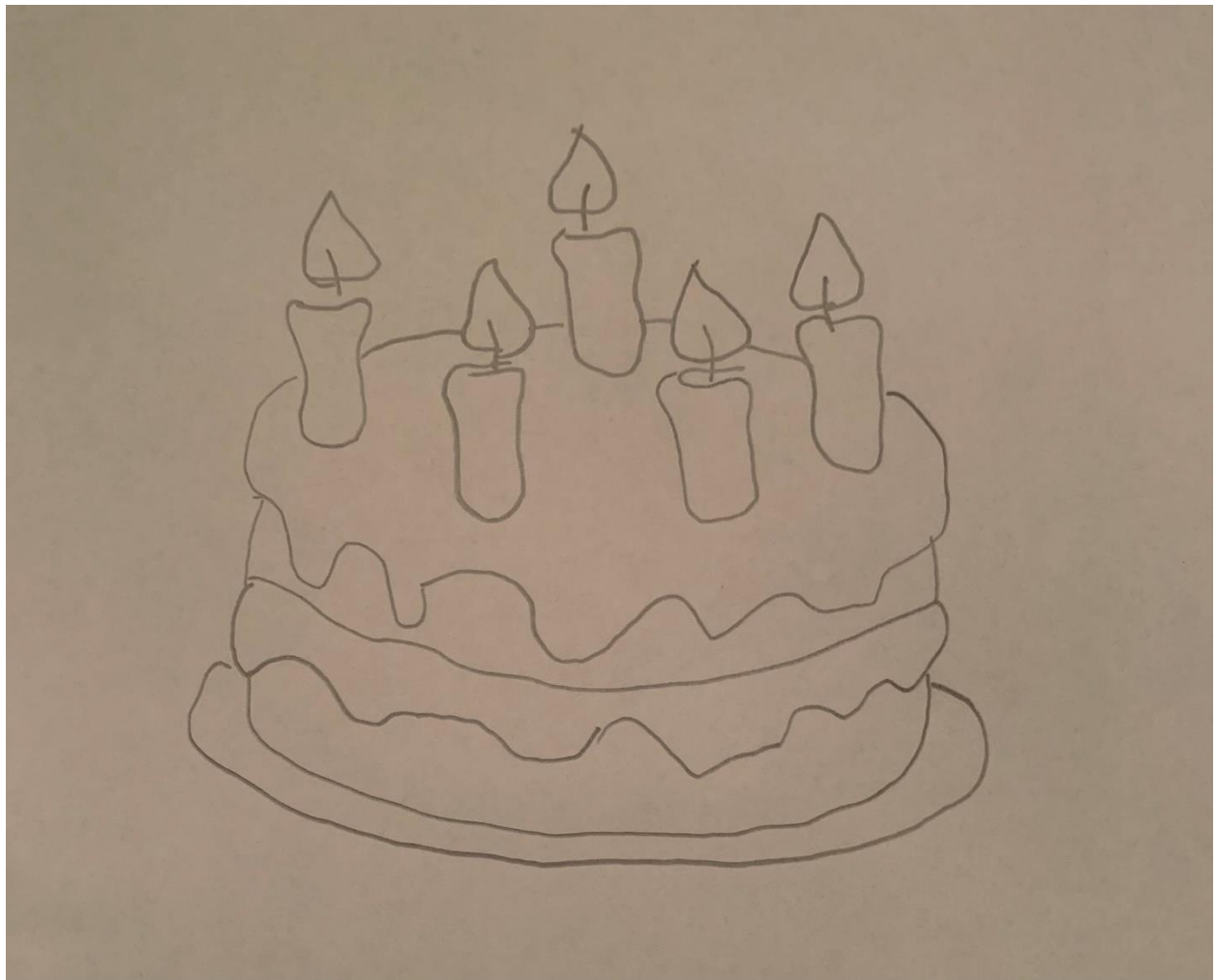
His Love Never Fails

“So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

Luke 2:16-20 (NIV)

December 24th Reflection:

God’s invitation to participate in His Christmas story is always available to you. Take a few extra minutes today and invite God into your life circumstances asking Him to show you about His great personal love for you this season.



Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.

*"May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes,
establish the work of our hands."*

Psalms 90:17 (NIV)

December 25th Reflection:

Ponder ways you would like God's help keeping your pathway lit in the New Year, centered on sharing Your story of His great love, causing great joy.

Notes:

All verses are taken from <https://www.biblegateway.com>.

“You send me into the desert, yet I’m not deserted
proclaiming Your Christmas story.

Please keep my pathway lit, centered on sharing
Your great love, causing great joy.”

Annie Wolf invites you to reflect on the myriad of realities from Christmas’s past as well as those in the current Advent season. Her reflection prompts encourage pausing daily with Jesus, praying about experiences, renewing in His Word and rejoicing
“over a cup of hot cocoa” in His goodness.

As a Women’s Ministry Director, Annie understands the benefits of sharing life in community. She heartens readers to share their Christmas testimony with those along their path. Her poems, mini-devotions and earnest prayers are woven with timeless verses and seasoned with God’s attributes and love.

““Especially during the Christmas season, I feel grief mixed with gratitude.” I am thankful for Annie pointing me to back to my Savior who promises to *“bring me tidings of comfort and joy.”*”

“Annie’s writing evoked me to recall wonderful memories from Christmases long ago. I enjoyed reminiscing over these stories with my children and grandchildren.”

“It’s helpful knowing others are still experiencing a “sleigh ride” full of feelings from the COVID19 pandemic. Annie’s authenticity inspires me to be more honest with God, myself and others about my truths.”

Elyse Wolf, adolescent daughter of Annie, captures the hearts of all ages through her delightful and lighthearted illustrations.

Annie prays those reading this Advent devotion will experience God’s love and be filled daily with His strength, joy, and peace.

Connect with Annie Wolf today at anniewolfchandler@gmail.com