

**St. James Episcopal Church  
A Moment for Kids—of All Ages!  
DECEMBER 3, 2017—FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**



“A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” *Isaiah 11:1*

#### **THE JESSE TREE**

A Jesse tree is a tree decorated with ornaments that tell about the history of the Jewish people and the heritage of Jesus. We sing “Oh little town of Bethlehem...The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” The Jesse Tree represents all of those hopes, fears and years when the people of Israel were waiting for the Messiah. So, the Jesse Tree is a lot like Advent. In Advent we prepare for the coming of Jesus, and the Jesse Tree tells us about many of the people and events of all of the Old Testament years that lead up to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah.

#### **WHO IS JESSE?**

Jesse is one of the ancestors of Jesus. Jesse was the son of Obed and the grandson of Ruth and of Boaz. We learn about Ruth, her mother-in-law Naomi, and Boaz in the Book of Ruth. Jesse lived in Bethlehem and was the father of the most famous King of Israel—King David.

When the people of Israel were in exile in the foreign land of Babylon, they were sad and felt that God had abandoned them. Isaiah listened to God and knew that that wasn't true. Isaiah wrote that a great King would come from the family of Jesse. The Jewish people believed that a mighty king would conquer their enemies and they would be a powerful nation once again. Christians have read this passage in Isaiah and understood it as a prophecy of Jesus coming to the world.

### JESUS' FAMILY

Both the Gospels of Luke and Matthew give a lineage of Jesus, with some differences. According to Luke there are 75 generations between Adam and Jesus, so I shortened the list a bit. Find Jesse on this list. He is one of Jesus' ancestors.

#### God created Adam and Eve →

Seth →

Enosh →

many generations... →

Noah →

Shem →

many generations... →

Abraham →

Isaac →

Jacob →

Judah and Tamar →

many generations... →

Boaz and Ruth →

Obed →

**Jesse** →

David and Bathsheba →

Nathan (according to Luke) or

Solomon and Naamah (according to Matthew) →

many generations... →

Mary and Joseph →

**JESUS**

#### ORNAMENTS ON A JESSE TREE

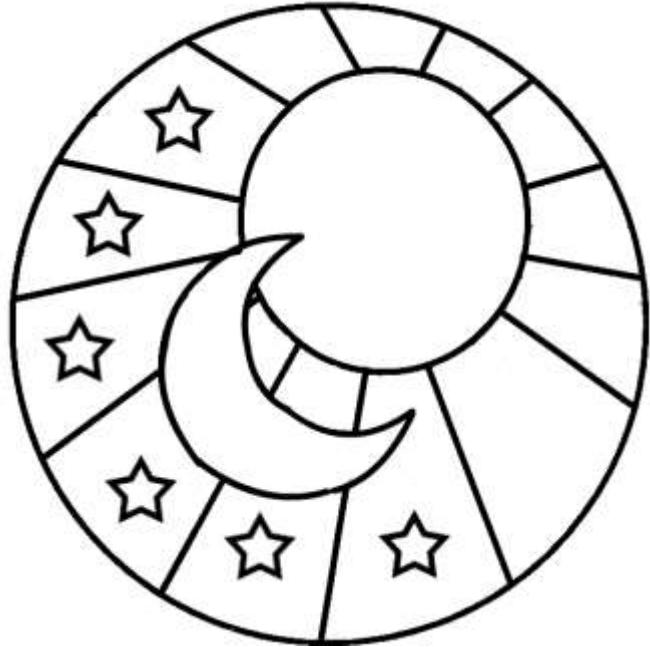
Each ornament represents a person or event in the Old Testament and together they tell the story of God's love in the world. Here are some traditional ornaments. Can you think of other people or stories from the Old Testament that you would include?

ORNAMENT	REPRESENTS
<b>Globe</b>	<b>Creation:</b> We know that God created all things.
<b>Apple and Serpent</b>	<b>Adam and Eve:</b> Sin divides us from God. But we know that God loves us still.
<b>Ark</b>	<b>Noah</b> was obedient to God—he built the Ark before it made any sense at all.
<b>Dove</b>	<b>Noah:</b> The dove that brought back the olive branch after the flood was over reminds us of God's love and care for us.

<b>Rainbow</b>	<b>Noah:</b> God put the rainbow in the sky to remind us that his promise to us will never be broken.
<b>Field of Stars</b>	<b>Abraham:</b> God promised Abraham that his family would be as numerous as the stars. Abraham's family includes all Jews, Muslims and Christians.
<b>Lamb</b>	<b>Isaac:</b> The lamb that God gave to Abraham to save Isaac reminds us of God's love for us all.
<b>Ladder</b>	<b>Jacob</b> dreamed of angels coming from and going to heaven.
<b>Coat of Many Colors</b>	<b>Joseph</b> saved the Hebrews from famine through his wisdom and devotion to God.
<b>Burning Bush</b>	<b>Moses:</b> God talked to Moses through the Burning Bush. We remember that God is always ready to talk with us.
<b>Wheat</b>	<b>Naomi and Ruth</b> gathered wheat in Boaz' field. Ruth and Boaz were great-grandparents of David.
<b>Crown</b>	<b>Kings of Israel:</b> King David and King Solomon were regular people who had successes and failures as kings. However, they tried to rule as God would want them to.
<b>Harp</b>	<b>King David</b> played the harp and wrote many of the Psalms.
<b>Shepherd's Hook</b>	<b>King David</b> was a shepherd before he was King.
<b>Temple</b>	<b>King Solomon</b> built the Temple in Jerusalem that was the home for the Ark of God.
<b>Whale</b>	<b>Jonah</b> spent three days in the belly of a fish. It reminds us of God's patience with us and Jonah's decision to follow God.
<b>A Path</b>	<b>Isaiah</b> prophesized that the people would return home. He wrote "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
<b>Lion</b>	<b>Daniel</b> was saved in the lion's den by God.
<b>Carpenter's Tools</b>	<b>Joseph</b> , the earthly father of Jesus, was a carpenter.
<b>Rose</b>	<b>Mary:</b> Isaiah wrote about "a rose blooming." We see the Rose as the Virgin Mary.
<b>Camel</b>	<b>The Three Kings</b> rode on camels to see Jesus. Their trip reminds us that we should be walking toward Jesus.
<b>Star</b>	<b>Star of Bethlehem</b> reminds us that all the hopes and dreams of the people are answered in Jesus and that Jesus is the Light of the World.

### MAKE YOUR OWN JESSE TREE!

These are some ideas for more ornaments to get you started. You are limited only by your imagination! What other stories or people would you include? Why not make some ornaments that express your own family heritage and traditions.



This insert is prepared by Mother Bonnie. If you have any questions about it, please let me know.  
It is posted weekly on [www.stjamesbatavia.org](http://www.stjamesbatavia.org)