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Thank you for organizing a *"Gifts of Hope"* fair to support El Hogar. This Advent Gift Fair is a simple way your community can support the important and life-changing work at El Hogar by making donations that represent real costs of our program in Honduras.

Supporters can choose from different giving options to support the children of El Hogar in five key areas: Education Scholarship, Nutrition & Health, Housing & Transportation, Skill Development & Vocational Training and Wellbeing & Individualized Support.

Enclosed in this toolkit are

- Detailed instructions for how to implement the program
- Printable Cards for display
- Sample text for promotional materials
- Worship resources
- A tracking page for recording donors

This toolkit provides you with all the necessary information and materials to make this program a success at your church or in your community. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@elhogar.org or 781-729-7600.

With gratitude,

Denise Vargas
Executive Director

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Advent Gift Fair Instructions

A few weeks in advance

1. Determine the number of cards you want to feature in your program. There are five program areas and three giving categories in each program area for a total of 15 different gift options. You can determine the total number of cards you want to feature based on the number of people in your congregation or community. For example, if there are 100 people in your community, feature at least 100 cards so everyone can participate!
2. Download and print the cards. They are double sided and look best printed in colour. To access the files, follow these instructions:
    a. Visit our website here: https://elhogar.org/digital-library/
    b. Use the password honduras (all lowercase)
    c. Click on the Gifts of Hope category and download each card file.
3. Make a plan for promotion. Consider promoting the program on your church's website, social media pages, in the church bulletin and in person during announcements. The more advanced notice the better.
4. Set a target goal for your program. Consider a goal of a certain dollar amount, or a certain number of gifts given.

One week in advance

1. Implement your promotion plan.
2. Decide how and where you will display the cards. Be creative! You can display them on a table or on a moveable bulletin or poster board or create a display that aligns with the Advent/Christmas theme. Perhaps you can hang the cards on a Christmas tree!

Managing the Advent Gift Fair Program

1. Encourage community members to choose one or more cards in a program area they are interested in supporting. They can scan the QR code on the back of the card which will take them to El Hogar's online donation page where they can make the donation corresponding to the card they choose. The card is theirs to keep once they make the donation!
2. Keep your community members updated on the progress towards your goal to continue to encourage participation.
3. Encourage online giving. This is the easiest way to manage donations and donor information and the best way to ensure that the donor receives a tax receipt.

a. In the case that community members would like to make a donation with cash or cheque, use the template included in the toolkit to collect their information. Electronic and printable versions of the template are included.

At the culmination of the Advent Gift Fair

1. Send in any cash or cheque donations to:
   El Hogar Ministries, Inc.
   c/o The Parish of Christ Church
   25 Central Street
   Andover, MA 01810
2. Email the donor tracking sheet to info@elhogar.org or mail the hard copy along with your cheque(s).
3. Encourage your community to continue to support El Hogar!
   a. Visit our website: www.elhogar.org
   b. Follow us on social media
   c. Join our mailing list
   d. Watch and share El Hogar Overview: https://youtu.be/E0b6ft6SesY
   e. Watch and share stories about our students: https://youtu.be/_PQBF7Q3a_w

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Email Template 1 – An Invitation to Parishioners Option #1

Subject: **An Invitation to Share Advent Hope**

Dear [Recipient's Name],

As Advent – a season of hope, reflection, and anticipation – draws near, I'm reaching out with a special invitation that embodies the spirit of giving and love that Christ has taught us.

This year, our church is supporting El Hogar Ministries in Honduras through their "Gifts of Hope" program. It's a wonderful initiative that seeks to uplift the vulnerable by offering five impactful gifts:

1. **Education Scholarships**: Granting the priceless gift of knowledge.
2. **Nutrition and Health**: Ensuring a child's growth and well-being.
3. **Housing and Transportation**: Building foundations for secure futures.
4. **Skill Development and Vocational Training**: Empowering with tools for a brighter tomorrow.
5. **Wellbeing and Individualized Support**: Mending and strengthening young hearts.

Each of these gifts, whether big or small, can profoundly alter the trajectory of a life. Moreover, if you're contemplating a unique and meaningful gift for a loved one this season, consider donating in their name. It's a beautiful way to honor them by extending love and hope to someone else.

I invite you, with a heart full of hope and hands open to give, to be a part of "Gifts of Hope". [A table will be set up at coffee hour where you can see what gifts are needed. Our goal is to raise $XXXX to support our neighbors in Honduras.] If you would like to make an unrestricted donation, you can do so by visiting: https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

Together, let's make this Advent season not just a time of waiting, but a season of transformative giving.

In Christ's love,

[El Hogar Champion or Priest's Name]

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Email Template 2 – An Invitation to Parishioners Option #2

Subject: **Gifts of Hope: A Special Call to Action**

Dear [Recipient's Name],

Warm Advent greetings to you and your family!

As we prepare our hearts and homes for the joyous celebration of Christ's birth, let us also remember our call to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.

El Hogar Ministries, working tirelessly in Honduras, has laid out a path for us to follow this Advent season with their "Gifts of Hope." These are not just gifts; they are lifelines of opportunity and hope:

1. **Education Scholarships**: Paving the way to brighter futures.
2. **Nutrition and Health**: Feeding bodies, nurturing souls.
3. **Housing and Transportation**: More than just walls - a sanctuary.
4. **Skill Development and Vocational Training**: Crafting dreams, one skill at a time.
5. **Wellbeing and Individualized Support**: Offering solace, healing, and guidance.

This season, if you're pondering over the perfect gift for someone, why not donate in their name? It's a gesture that captures the essence of Christ's teachings and serves as a lasting testament to love and care.

I humbly ask you to heed this call and make a meaningful contribution to "Gifts of Hope". [A table will be set up at coffee hour where you can see what gifts are needed. Our goal is to raise $XXXX to support our neighbors in Honduras.] If you would like to make an unrestricted donation, you can do so by visiting: https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

With your help, we can transform this Advent into a beacon of hope and love, illuminating the path for many in Honduras.

Blessings and Peace,
[El Hogar Champion or Priest's Name]

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Announcement Script

This year, our church is supporting El Hogar Ministries in Honduras through their "Gifts of Hope" program. It's a wonderful initiative that seeks to uplift the vulnerable by offering opportunities to support the children of El Hogar in five key areas: **Education, Nutrition & Health**, **Housing and Transportation**, **Skill Development & Vocational Training and Wellbeing and Individualized Support**.

A gift in any of these areas, whether big or small, can profoundly alter the trajectory of a life. And, if you're contemplating a unique and meaningful gift for a loved one this season, consider donating in their name. It's a beautiful way to honor them by extending love and hope to someone else.

Our goal is to raise $XXXX to support our neighbors in Honduras. A table will be set up at coffee hour where you can see what gifts are needed. You can choose a card with the gift you would like to make, scan the QR code on the back and make a donation online directly to El Hogar. You can also speak to [person] for more information.

Together, let's make this Advent season not just a time of waiting, but a season of transformative giving.

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Bulletin Announcements

Announcement 1: Embark on the Journey of Advent Generosity

Dear [Church Name] family,

Advent is not just a time of waiting; it's a time of active hope. As we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, we have an opportunity to embody His teachings of love and charity.

This season, we're partnering with El Hogar Ministries for their "Gifts of Hope" initiative. Situated in the heart of Honduras, El Hogar is dedicated to uplifting vulnerable communities by providing education scholarships, nutritious meals, housing & transportation, vocational training, and individualized support.

Imagine the joy of a child receiving an education scholarship, the gratitude of a family getting regular nutritious meals, or the hope instilled in a young adult learning a new skill. Your contribution can make these dreams a reality.

As you light your Advent candles this year, let's also light up the lives of those less fortunate.

Please consider extending your generosity to "Gifts of Hope". [Our goal is to raise $XXXX to support our neighbors in Honduras. A table will be set up at coffee hour where you can see what gifts are needed.] Donations can be made directly online at: https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

Together, let's make this Advent season a beacon of hope and transformative love.

Announcement 2: A Special Advent Invitation from [Church Name]

Beloved congregation,

In the quiet moments of Advent reflection, we are reminded of God's greatest gift to us and the call to share our blessings with the world.

This year, we invite you to join hands with El Hogar Ministries' "Gifts of Hope" program.

Nestled in Honduras, El Hogar works diligently to carve out rays of hope for communities, especially the young and vulnerable. Through five profound gift avenues - from education scholarships to emotional support - they are changing lives, one child, one family at a time.

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As the Advent wreath's candles burn brighter each week, signaling the approach of Christ's birth, let's also ensure a brighter future for our neighbors in need. Your generous contribution can sow seeds of hope, education, safety, skill, and healing.

Please consider extending your generosity to "Gifts of Hope". [Our goal is to raise $XXXX to support our neighbors in Honduras. A table will be set up at coffee hour where you can see what gifts are needed.] Donations can be made directly online at: https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

This Advent, let our faith and generosity converge, casting ripples of positive change and echoing the true spirit of the season.

Social Media Captions for Church Promotion

Post including all the gift types:

🌟 **Gifts of Hope** 🌟
This Advent season, our church community is celebrating by giving hope through El Hogar Ministries in Honduras. Each gift we offer brings a unique ray of hope:
📚 Education Scholarships: Unlocking doors to endless possibilities. 🍎 Nutrition and Health: Ensuring vibrant health and vitality. 🏠 Housing and Transportation: Crafting sanctuaries of safety and warmth. 🛠️ Skill Development and Vocational Training: Lighting pathways to self-reliance and prosperity. 💖 Wellbeing and Individualized Support: Mending hearts and nurturing resilience.
Together, we can weave a tapestry of love, support, and transformation this Advent. Will you join us in making a difference? 🙏 #GiftsOfAdventHope #ElHogarBlessings
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

One post for each gift type:

1. Education Scholarships
📚✨ This Advent season, our church community is celebrating Advent by giving hope through El Hogar Ministries. The gift of education can change the course of a child's life forever. Let's empower dreams by providing scholarships. Will you join us? 🌟 #GiftOfEducation #AdventHope
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

2. Nutrition and Health
🍎❤️ A nourished body paves the way for a nourished soul. This Advent season, our church community is celebrating by ensuring health and vitality for those in need with El Hogar Ministries. Together, we can be the difference. 🙏 #GiftOfHealth #AdventGenerosity
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

3. Housing and Transportation
🏠🕊️ A safe place to call home and a way to get there. This Advent season, our church community is teaming up with El Hogar Ministries to create safe spaces where children can feel safe and loved while helping families stay connected to school, community and one another. Let's build together. Ever journey begins with a place to belong! 🪵 #GiftOfBelonging #AdventBlessings
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

4. Skill Development and Vocational Training

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🛠️🌱 Equip a young adult with a skill, and you light their path for life. This Advent season, our church community is celebrating Advent by giving hope through El Hogar Ministries. Let's invest in bright futures. 🌟 #GiftOfSkills #AdventChange
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

5. Wellbeing and Individualized Support

💖🤝 Every child deserves to feel seen, supported and cared for. This Advent season, our church community joins El Hogar Ministries in creating opportunity for encouragement, healing and belonging through the gift of individualized are and support. Together we can nurture the whole child and help hope take root. #GiftOfHealing #AdventLove
https://elhogar.thankyou4caring.org/el-hogar-gifts-of-hope

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Notice of Final Result and Thank You

[Name of Church or Community]'s [Name of Season] Gifts of Hope was a success!

Your generous response during this [Name of Season] will help El Hogar provide opportunities for Honduran children to transform their future.

Our community [reached/exceeded our goal of XXX].

Your generosity will help spark the joy of a child receiving a quality education, instill hope in a young adult learning a new skill and inspire gratitude of a family whose future looks different because their child is empowered to transform their life. Your contribution will make dreams a reality.

On behalf of the children of El Hogar, *¡Muchisimas gracias!*

With gratitude,
[El Hogar Champion or Priest Name]

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Sermon Gift for Preachers

Dear preacher,
The following Advent III sermon has been prepared as a gift for you from El Hogar Ministries, Inc., the US-based group that financially supports El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. El Hogar is a ministry of The Episcopal Church. It is designed to express the hope stirred in our hearts by the ongoing faithfulness of God working through the ministries we witness in Honduras, so that this hope can be a source of light for your community as you prepare for the One who will soon come among us.

Why an Advent III sermon?

As we look at the calendar and notice that Advent IV & Christmas Eve are going to keep clergy and lay leaders hopping with worship service preparations, we wanted to put some time into your calendar for the week of December 14-18, so that you could: nap, shop, bake cookies, go on a retreat, squeeze in a committee meeting, whatever!

How you might use it:
The sermon can be delivered by one or more youth or adult member(s) of the congregations who has been to El Hogar or who have a passion for global mission & ministry. (When we say "mission," we know this may trigger some colonial era imagery. We are working faithfully to de-colonize our approach to ministry, and we use the word mission to mean the ways we are sent out by God.) The sermon can be used by a clergy person or lay preacher, depending on the practices of your diocese.

About the sermon & message:

- It references the Collect, **Canticle 15** (an option to replace Psalm), and John 1:6-8,19-28.
- It was written by a lay person and an Episcopal priest, utilizing imagery from our knowledge of El Hogar's work with children in Honduras.
- It refers to a 25-minute movie that can be downloaded: https://youtu.be/_PQBF7Q3a_w
- Here is a 6-minute overview of El Hogar: https://youtu.be/E0b6ft6SesY
- Feel free to share the links in your bulletin, during announcements, or on social media.
- It is 999 words long, which we believe provides about 8-10 minutes of sermon.

A few ways to strengthen the connections:
Depending on how well you know the organization, you may choose to:

- spend some time on the website elhogar.org,
- promote *the Gifts of Hope* materials during coffee fellowship time for just-in-time gift giving,

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- make a congregational donation to El Hogar and announce in the sermon/announcements,
- take a special second congregational offering by passing around a big mixing bowl with a wooden spoon in it (ties in with sermon imagery!),
- watch the free film, and
- join the mailing list.

And finally, THANK YOU! We rely on the partnership and generosity of folks throughout the Episcopal Church and beyond to sustain the education, meals, care, and connections that El Hogar provides to over 200 students. Thank you for widening the circle of support and connecting your community with the wonderful children of El Hogar. May the hope born on Christmas arrive yet again in our midst.

Con amor y esperanza/With love & hope,
Elizabeth Thornton & The Rev. Dina van Klaveren
Partners of El Hogar Ministries, Inc.
elhogar.org

Third Sunday of Advent, Year B, RCL

The Collect: Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Canticle 15 - The Song of Mary *Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

The Gospel- John 1:6-8,19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

SERMON

Some of our fondest Christmas memories take place in the kitchen. Elizabeth recalls baking with Norwegian immigrant neighbors: how they warmly invited her in to their cardamon-scented kitchen to bake *krumkake*. The days leading up to Christmas were Mayela’s favorite: growing up in Honduras, she helped to break eggs into *rompopo*, an eggnog type recipe that would be bottled and given to friends. Her mother, Julia, let Mayela add the bows and name tags when the bottles were ready to share.

In the kitchen preparations before the Christmas holiday, we stir up solidarity and love, cultural connections and family traditions, warm hospitality and that deep desire to share good treats with those we love.

As we grow older, we know how challenging it was for neighbors and parents to include us in the kitchen! While measuring and recipe reading and egg breaking as children gave us skills we needed for life, it certainly made a bit more work for the adults! An egg shell to remove here, a lopsided cookie over there. And yet, when they included us in the kitchen, they stirred in us a sense of belonging and celebration as real as the gooey eggshells and strong whiffs of cardamom.

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Imagine entering a large kitchen in Honduras with me, where Dona Tona cooks and bakes for the children of El Hogar. “El Hogar” is Spanish for “The Home,” and it’s shorthand for: The Home of Love and Hope (El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza). El Hogar is a residential and day school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras with two campuses: one for elementary school students, and one for middle & high school students.

Dona Tona runs this kitchen, teaching her staff and the students how to cook and bake and clean up. She has cooked and baked in El Hogar’s kitchen since this campus opened in the 1979, when several Episcopal church members expanded an outreach ministry they founded to get children off the streets of Tegucigalpa, to a home where it was safe. Those of us who have traveled to El Hogar on a CONNECTS trip know the smile and kindness and good cooking of Dona Tona and her staff as they feed us homemade tortillas, beans, chicken, salad, and cheese.

In addition to Dona Tona’s big kitchen, there’s a special space at El Hogar just for baking bread. This space was designed for children - they come in, wash their hands, read the recipe and plunge their hands into the bags of flour, learning to measure, mix and knead, to wait and wait and wait until it’s time to bake. And then, imagine these eager children, growing up in a country where food is so precious, where a loaf of bread means a family will survive another day- imagine these eager children taking their loaves of bread into the dining area and sharing it with their friends, with Dona Tona and their teachers.

Dona Tona and the staff of El Hogar are stirring up in these students a sense of belonging and hope as real as the goopy dough of bread and the whiffs of yeasty goodness escaping from the oven.

In an office toward the front of the El Hogar campus in Tegucigalpa, Denise Vargas, Executive Director of El Hogar, is stirring up the ways we do education with children in socioeconomically challenged situations. She is stirring up the system and inviting staff and board members and donors to examine how we engage this work most faithfully, adhering to what the research shows is best for children and their families. She continues to write and rewrite the recipes for our work at El Hogar with an abiding commitment to changing lives and generating hope, even if it means getting messy.

Denise Vargas, a native of Honduras, is stirring up a new way of supporting children that not only benefits the students of El Hogar, it benefits Honduras, it benefits those of us who support the effort in prayer, in solidarity, in generous giving.

In ***Hope in Honduras***, a short film about two El Hogar students, we meet the mother of Maria Jose and grandmother of Nasrit. These women express their deep longing for life to change,

especially for their children. They are grateful for the ways El Hogar is stirring up future possibilities for their children, for the ways God is stirring up their hope in what can seem such hopeless circumstances of abandonment, poverty, and natural disaster.

In Luke's Gospel, which we hear today as a Canticle, we hear the voice of Mary calling out to God in song, giving voice to her hope that God will use the birth of her child to stir up hope in hopeless times, as God has always done for God's people.

Mary sings out in a song of rejoicing that imagines generations to come experiencing the loving-kindness and justice of God. She sings out in a song that prepares us for what God is going to do by breaking into the world in the form of Jesus - God will stir things up!

God will scatter the proud in their conceit and cast down the mighty from their places of power while lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with the good things for which they have longed!

Stirring up the world sounds like messy work, and we know that this one Mary is waiting for will stir up conflicts between those in power and those who are lowly. Jesus will stir up our ideas about being right and righteous and teach us new ways to live in love together.

Just as our neighbors and mothers included us in their Christmas baking and making, so God includes us in stirring up the world for good. God is stirring up a hope in us as real as an expectant mother's dream for her child, as real as our unity as the people of God as we reach out our hands for bread, as we sip from the cup.

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Donor Tracking & Materials

All of the printable cards are available on our website. Visit this URL https://elhogar.org/digital-library/ and use the password **honduras** to access them. Or to download them directly, click the links below.

Printable Cards:
Education: https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/EDUCATION-SCOLARSHIP.pdf
Nutrition & Health: https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/NUTRITION-AND-HEALTH.pdf
Housing & Transportation: https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/HOUSING-AND-TRANSPORTATION.pdf
Skill Development & Vocational Training: https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/SKILL-DEVELOPMENT.pdf
Wellbeing & Individualized Support: https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/WELLBEING-AND-INDIVIDUALISM-SUPPORT.pdf

Download electronic template for tracking donor information here:

https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Donor-Information-Tracking-Electronic.xlsx

or a printable version here:

https://elhogar.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Donor-Information-Tracking-Printable.xlsx