

DECEMBER 24-25, 2023
CHRISTMAS EVE,
CHRISTMAS DAY



God's plan for hope, peace, joy, and love.

CHRISTMAS BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Christmas observances.

Sunday	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96	The reign of the coming king Sing a new song
Monday	Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20	God's kindness and the new life The birth of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR CHRISTMAS

*But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. **Luke 2:19-20 (NRSV)***

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Christmas:

Almighty and merciful God, we give you thanks and praise for the birth of Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food; for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the seas roar, and all that fills it. Amen. (Psalm 96:11)

A Blessing to Give:

May the birth of Jesus the Messiah give you joy. (Luke 2:11)



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HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS

Silent Night, Holy Night!



CHRISTMAS MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When you think of the Christmas story, what do you wonder about?
- Who (angel, shepherd, Mary, Joseph) would you be in the Christmas story? Why?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 2:1-20.

Christmas tells a surprising story of God's saving work. God joins our world as a vulnerable baby. This child was born to a couple who were forced to leave home because of a new census registration law. Jesus' birth and the humble beginnings do not fit our usual perceptions of divine power and glory. And yet, angels come with a message of good news for all, a message not seen as favorable to rulers of the empire. The angelic messengers even give lowly shepherds front row seats to a cosmic chorus signaling that the world is being turned upside down. Every Christmas we are invited to join angels, shepherds, Mary, and Joseph and let loose with joy at the news that the world of compassion and vulnerability is blessed by God. Life as God wants it is coming to fruition. It leads us to ponder with Mary what it all means and to give shouts of praise to God with shepherds and all those looking for God's amazing power for peace, acceptance, and hope.

Discuss: How does the Christmas story encourage you to give thanks and praise to God?

Pray: **Almighty God, give us hearts and minds to cherish Jesus' birth and the message of the angels that brings peace and joy for all. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Bible Readings and theme for Christmas, how can you share the joy of Jesus' birth with someone?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent all pointed to Jesus. Place a white candle in the center of the four candles on the Advent wreath. The white candle represents Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Psalm 96 is a song of praise to God. For Christians that includes Jesus, our Lord: *"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice."* Gather around the Advent wreath. Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, the third candle of joy and the fourth candle of love. Take a moment to reflect on the Advent journey before lighting the white candle that represents Jesus Christ. As you light the white candle, say: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."* (John 1:5)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org