

DECEMBER 29  
FIRST SUNDAY  
OF CHRISTMAS



*The Christmas message is full of grace and truth.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 1:1-18	The Word became flesh
Monday	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Promise of Salvation
Tuesday	Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7	God has freed us from the law
Wednesday	Titus 3:4-7	A God of mercy
Thursday	Ephesians 1:3-14	Gifts bestowed to be shared
Friday	Jeremiah 31:7-14	The joyful return of the exiles
Saturday	Psalms 147:12-20	Sing and praise the Lord
Sunday	Matthew 2:1-12	The Magi worship Jesus

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**John 1:14 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of grace and truth, give us faith to believe and to live with joy, for you have entered our world and our lives as the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, just as you give us our daily bread, give us the joy of knowing the Bread of Life who brings light to all people. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you with grace and joy.



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Hark the Herald  
Angels Sing*



### WEEKLY 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:

- The twelve days of Christmas have not ended. Why do you think some people take their decorations down early?
- What is so amazing about the Christmas story?
- Why is the message of Christmas so important to hear again and again?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read: John 1:1-18.*

After the celebrations, it is hard to remember that we are still in the season of Christmas, a time to focus on the power, meaning, and joy of Christ's birth. This is when "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (v. 14). It is good to know that we are children of God. Ephesians lifts this up by noting that we are adopted. The Greek text makes it clear that we are adopted like a son. At that time, it was the son who inherited all that the father had. We, as those adopted by God, are heirs to all that God has (Ephesians 1:14). What an amazing message, filled with "grace and truth." John uses the word grace (undeserved kindness) four times in this text, but never again. The rest of the Gospel gives us examples of this grace through light, bread, wine, vines, water, and more. The Christmas message is worthy of an entire season to envision and digest again and again. God comes in human form to touch us with "grace upon grace" (v. 16) that we may know that we are children and heirs of all that God can give us. How can you continue to celebrate and live the message of Christmas in daily life?

*Pray: O God of Christmas joy, remind us of your grace and truth that makes us heirs of eternal gladness through the Word that became flesh and now still lives among us. Amen.*

### SERVICE

The twelve days of Christmas begin on December 25th and end on January 5th, the day before Epiphany. We often increase giving and donations to support those in need the weeks before Christmas but seldom the days after. Sing or listen to *The Twelve Days of Christmas* song. It is about giving. For each verse of the song the giving increases. In what ways can you increase your giving of time, talents, and treasures this coming year?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. Take time this week to think about what this means. Sit in a room after dark and turn the lights out. How does it feel to be in the dark? Then light a candle and think about the difference between light and darkness. What does the light provide that darkness does not? Say a prayer of thanks to Jesus for being the light that darkness cannot overcome.



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