



LESSONS *and* CAROLS

"Helping others receive grace, purpose and direction by proclaiming Christ's love."

17 East 27th Street
Scottsbluff, NE
(308) 632-8023
calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org

Sunday Morning Worship
10:00 a.m.
December 26, 2021

First Sunday of Christmas A Service of Lessons and Carols

Prayer Before Worship: God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that with all of creation we may sing new songs of gladness and walk in the way of peace. Amen.

(In preparation for our worship together, you are invited to take a moment of silence to offer your own prayers of worship and praise.)

KEY: ELW and any page number = Worship hymnal (cranberry),
OSB = Other Song Book (red), W&P = Worship & Praise (purple).

* Indicates please stand if able. Congregational responses are printed in **BOLD** type.

A Warm Welcome to all as we gather as God's people to worship our Lord. We pray our worship together would strengthen your faith and desire to know and serve the One who loves us with an everlasting love as made known to us in Jesus Christ.

***Visitors,** if you are worshipping with us in person or online today,
we are glad to have you with us.*

Prelude Music

Welcome and Announcements

‡WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS‡

Opening Dialogue

Jesus, the bright Morning Star, shines light in the world.

By day and night he shines for all to see.

Jesus was born in the midst of injustice and poverty

that the world may see the justice and richness of God.

God so loved the world that God sent Jesus,

so that all who believe in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus is the light of the world.

Jesus is the light of our lives.

Sing to God a new song!

A song of hope, joy, and peace around the world.

1. The bells of Christmas chime once more;
the heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still
with new year gifts of peace, good will.

4. Oh, join with me, in gladness sing,
to keep our Christmas with our king,
until our song, from loving souls,
like rushing mighty water rolls!

***Confession of Sins/Assurance of Forgiveness**

(All may make the sign of the cross ✠ the sign marked at baptism, as we begin)

Amid the troubles and fears of this world, let us confess our sin and welcome God's forgiveness, grace, and love.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our lack of faith and trust.

Your Son was born in the poverty of a stable.

Forgive our neglect of the poor.

The shepherds left their flocks and went to Bethlehem.

Forgive our selfishness and complacency.

With great joy the angels proclaimed, “Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy. Today is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” In ✠ Jesus, who is Savior, Christ, and Lord, our sins are forgiven. May you know the peace which the angels sang from the heavens. Indeed, God's forgiveness is good news of great joy! **Amen.**

***Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Gracious God of heaven and earth,

you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness—a beam of light that shines through Jesus. Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation.

Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life. Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world and in our hearts. Amen.

‡GOD'S WORD SPEAKS TO US‡

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Hymn:

"I Wonder As I Wander"

**WOV # 642
vv. 1, 2**

**1. I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.
For poor on'ry people like you and like I...
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.**

**2. When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.**

Second Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
⁵and he shall be the one of peace.
If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.

Hymn:

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ELW # 279

vv. 1, 2

**1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**2. For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!**

Third Reading: Luke 1:26-35, 38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Hymn:

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

**ELW #272
vv. 1**

**1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.**

Fourth Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Hymn:

“Love Has Come”

**ELW #292
vv. 1, 2**

**Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.**

**Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.**

Fifth Reading: Luke 2:8-20

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hymn:

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

**ELW #275
vv. 1, 2**

**1. Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

**2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

Sixth Reading: Matthew 2:1-11

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Hymn:

"The First Noel"

ELW #300

vv. 1, 3

**1. The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

**3. And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain***

Children's Sermon

Pastor Sheryl

Brief Reflection

Pastor Sheryl

‡WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD‡

***Hymn**

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

ELW #276

**Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!**

The Prayers of the Church

It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth.

Your Word, Jesus, is truth.

In his light, draw all to the manger

to gather in wonder with the shepherds.

In his light, draw all to the manger

to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.

In his light, draw all to the manger

to sing for joy with the angels.

In the brightness of his life

cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty, and hunger in the world.

It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way. Hear now our prayers....

In the light of Jesus, **show the world the way of life. Amen.**

***Exchange of Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Special Music

“I Wonder If He Knew?”

Pastor Sheryl

***Offertory Prayer**

Gracious and loving God, **we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

‡HOLY COMMUNION‡

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

The Lord be with you.

And with you, God's servant.

Holy God, you sent forth your Son into the world to be our Savior. He is the light shining in the darkness; he is Emmanuel, God with us. In him all things are restored, and in him we have abundant life, joy and peace. Therefore, as those who rejoice in the redemption you have brought, as those who see, and hear, and leap for joy, we lift our voices unto you, joining with the angels and those who have gone before us, singing the song of the Kingdom:

***Holy, Holy, Holy**

(Tune: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord! God of hosts, by all adored!
Heav'n and earth cannot contain, All the glory of Your name!
Hail, Hosanna, God most high!
Blest, the one, who now draws nigh
In the name of God the King! Hallelujahs glad we sing:
Hail, hosanna! Praises due, Be forever, Lord to You!**

The Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever, and ever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

In Christ's manger, at Christ's table,
come, see what God makes known for you.

Distribution of Communion:

Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper with gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.
All are welcome and invited to receive Holy Communion.

***Hymn:**

“Go Tell It On the Mountain”

ELW #290

vv. 1, 3

Refrain: **Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1. While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**3. Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. Emmanuel, God, is with you.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Copyright Permissions: Liturgy: From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS103411. Scripture readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Music: The Bells of Christmas: Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823-1883, alt. ©Public Domain; **O Little Town of Bethlehem:** Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893, ©Public Domain; **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming:** Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4 ©Public Domain; **Love Has Come:** CCLI Song # 2060820 Ken Bible © 1996, 1997 LNWhymns.com (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.) *For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com* CCLI License #1825044; **Angels, from the Realms of Glory:** Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4 ©Public Domain; **The First Noel:** Text: English traditional ©Public Domain; **Infant Holy, Infant Lowly:** Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt. ©Public Domain; **Good Christian Friends, Rejoice:** Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, ©Public Domain; **Go Tell It on the Mountain** Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt. ©Public Domain

Prayer Requests



If you have a prayer request you would like added to the prayers of the people on Sunday morning, you may notify Christy in the church office during the week or during worship use the Attendance and Prayer Request card and pass them towards the center aisle to be picked up by the ushers (for those worshipping with us online you will find the form under the worship tab on our website and prayer requests will be added to the prayer list in the bulletin the following weekend.)

±In Our Thoughts and Prayers±

Prayers for healing: **Mary Jo Huelle**, **Jean Collins** (hip replacement surgery), **Kathy Pickett** (cancer—Virginia Pickett's niece), **Jan Van Newkirk** (back surgery), **Kathy Johnson** (back issues), **Maeve Singer** (medical issues—Nick & Lindsey Singer's 6 month old daughter), **Alice Braaten** (rehab), **Kathy Rahrs** (recovering from back surgery—Val Rahrs' mother), **Mark** (Jean Collins & Kathy Johnson's cousin's husband), **Liam** (diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy—Jude Walker's great grandson), **LaDonna Schmidt** (chemotherapy), **Greta Mehling** (Health Issues), **Bruce** (Cancer treatments—friend of Jean Collins & Cathy Johnson), **Reuben & Gloria Gorr** (health issues), **Jordan Hein** (cancer treatment—former member of Calvary), **Julie** (cancer treatment—Travis Miller family), **Joan** (cancer—niece of Marj Nikont), **Patty** (cancer—Jim Dorn's sister-in-law).

Prayers of comfort and peace: For the family and friends of **Katharine Nelson** (Barb Jensen's mother) and the **Bruner's and Brester's** and for all grieving during the Christmas season.

Prayers for: those dealing with the grief & destruction caused by the December tornadoes, **Austin & Teighlor** (facing hard decision in regard to son Liam—Jude Walker's granddaughter & husband).



Sid Henderson, 12/26; Vicki Schmidt, 12/26; Alec Sibal, 12/26; Kathy Johnson, 12/27;
Tracy Steele, 12/28; Jack Schmidt 12/31; Kathrine Fulk, 1/1

If we have missed your birthday, please let the office know. Thanks.



YOUR GIVING ONLINE

Scan the **QR code** to the right, go to our website: www.calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org and click on the **Give Online** button OR download the **Vanco Now App** on your smartphone. It's safe and secure.



JANUARY FOOD DONATIONS REQUESTED

FOOD PANTRY: Cereal

BACKPACKS: 16oz Peanut butter

Containers are located outside Fellowship Hall.

Thanks for your generosity.



Thank you

Thank you to all of you for your support of the Angel Tree. You are giving these special little angels a wonderful Christmas this year by purchasing gifts and donating money to purchase gifts. God Bless you all!



Endowment Fund application forms are now available in the office. These funds may be used for outreach: Churchwide, Nebraska Synod, and local. The deadline is December 31, 2021.



Coffee and Fellowship



Coffee and fellowship started back up. We would like to invite people to stay after worship for a time of fellowship. The coffee pot will be on, but if you would like to provide treats, please sign up on the sheet outside the office.



JAM & EPIC on Christmas Break until January 12, 2022



**** PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO SATURDAY EVENING SERVICE ON JANUARY 1ST.**

Laundry Love



Calvary is partnering with St. Francis Episcopal Church and First Presbyterian Church to provide a monthly Laundry Love Event in our community. Calvary will host Laundry Love every 3rd month starting on Jan 15th. In preparation for that day, we will need quarters as well as dryer sheets or softener. Laundry detergent has already been donated. So, save your quarters and drop them in the Laundry Bottle outside the pastor's offices.

Sound System Operator Needed!!

We are in need of 1 or 2 people who would be willing to run the sound system during worship services, especially on Praise Team Sundays. If interested, please talk to Pastors Chris or Sheryl or Jim Dorn.



WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastors Chris and Sheryl Kester Beyer

This Sunday – December 26

USHERS: Vicki Howell & LaDonna Schmidt

LAY READER: Susan Martin

COMMUNION ASST: Shari Copsey

POWERPOINT: Maunette Loeks-Van Patten

ACOLYTE: Rhyan Buckley

MEDIA: Jeff Van Patten

AUDIO: Jim Dorn

ALTAR GUILD: Andi Dorn, Shelly Koehler

ORGANIST: Rhonda Boettcher

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP: Merrick Walsh

Next Sunday – January 2

USHERS: Kent & Dawn Holub

LAY READER: LaDonna Schmidt

COMMUNION ASST: Dennis Gorr

POWERPOINT: Andi Dorn

ACOLYTE: Katie Hess

MEDIA: Maunette Loeks-Van Patten

AUDIO:

ALTAR GUILD: Abby Newsom, Barb Jensen,
Maunette Loeks-Van Patten, Nannie Walsh

PIANIST: Dee Brady

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP: Shari Copsey

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, December 26

10 a.m. – Worship

11 a.m. – Coffee & Fellowship in
Fellowship Hall

Saturday, January 1

Happy New Year's

NO Worship

Sunday, January 2

10 a.m. – Worship

11 a.m. – Coffee & Fellowship in
Fellowship Hall

DECEMBER 19, 2021
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



We rejoice in the fulfillment of God's promises.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth
Monday	Micah 5:2-5a	A promised ruler
Tuesday	Hebrews 10:5-10	Christ's sacrifice once for all
Wednesday	Micah 4:1-5	Peace through obedience
Thursday	Psalms 80:1-7	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Friday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Saturday	John 1:1-14	The Word became flesh
Sunday	Luke 2:41-52	The boy Jesus at the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Luke 1:46b-47 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Come, Lord Jesus, come and bring hope, peace, joy, and love to our lives and for all the world. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God of abundance, as you fill us with this meal, we pray for all to have enough food to be satisfied and enough hope to have peace and joy in Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the mercy and love of God shine on you and give you joy.



© 2021 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

For a larger printable 'Taking Faith Home' go to our website calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org

DECEMBER 19, 2021
HYMN OF THE WEEK
He Came Down



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:

- How is love more of a commitment to others than an emotion that comes and goes?
- How does Jesus' birth show God's loving commitment to us?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 1:39-55.

It is quite common for Christians to wonder what the God of the Old Testament has to do with the God of the New Testament and the grace, mercy, and peace described there. For Luke 1, the answer is everything. It is the same God. The God of the Old Testament keeps promises, like the promise of new life to Elizabeth, a woman beyond the child-bearing years, and Mary, a young maiden without a husband. This is the God who cares for the lowly and brings down the powerful, cares for the hungry, and sends the rich away empty. This new world order of fitting up the lowly is never fully lived out in Luke for all to see, but God's mercy definitely changes lives and households, like those of Elizabeth and Mary. God's steadfast love and mercy is here to stay, and God's people rejoice.

Discuss: Where do you see God's love today?

Pray: Loving God, just as you gave Elizabeth and Mary reason to rejoice, fill us with love and joy in your presence through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme this week, how can you care for the lowly and feed the hungry?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

For this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we light four candles on the Advent Wreath.

Soy: We light the first candle, the Prophet's candle, the second candle, the Bethlehem candle, the third candle, the Shepherd's candle, and light the fourth candle, the Angel's candle. The fourth candle announces Jesus' mission on earth to love and unite all people, bringing them closer to God. May we prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives and our world with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Pray: Dear God, give us faith to trust your word, peace to care for others, hope in your promise, joy for the coming of Jesus, and love to share through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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