

12/7/25
2nd Sunday in Advent
For Group Meetings from November 30th – December 6th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Gracious and faithful God, you hear the longings we hardly dare to speak and you remember your promises from generation to generation. As you sent your angel to Zechariah with good news of hope, open our hearts to trust that nothing is impossible with you. When our prayers feel unanswered, strengthen us with your mercy. When doubt weighs us down, lift us by your Spirit. Prepare us to receive your Son with joy, that our lives may bear witness to your saving grace. Through Jesus Christ, our coming Lord. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER

Share: How did last week's scripture (Luke 2:1-3) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: Luke 1:5-25

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. How are Zechariah and Elizabeth described in terms of their character and situation?
2. Where is Zechariah when the angel appeared to him and what is he doing?
3. How do the people outside the sanctuary react when Zechariah comes out unable to speak?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What weariness do you carry in your body and soul this week?
2. How do you react and respond to silence? Have you ever been intentionally silent for a certain amount of time? What was that like?
3. Who has exemplified faithfulness in your life?

Memorize this verse: "With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17) How do you prepare for the Christmas season?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

Certain literary genres have recognizable patterns. When you read a fairy tale, you know the knight in shining armor will save the damsel in distress. Or that the fair and kind maiden will triumph over her evil and conniving sister. In mysteries, the characters are different but the patterns similar: the smart, careful sleuth will solve her case, catching the culprit and revealing all in the last scene. When we watch these stories unfold, we pick up the clues the author has scattered across the story and allow our expectations to be guided by them. Biblical literature is like that, too, and anyone reading Luke – whether in the first or twenty-first century – can hear clues that set our expectations, this time not for a rescue or a solution to a mystery, but for a miracle.

Here are the clues: two righteous and faithful people too old to have children, a barren wife, and a chance assignment that brings the husband into the Temple. When you hear or see these kinds of things unfolding, you know something is bound to happen. This story is reminiscent of that of Abraham and Sarah, who were also faithful, barren, too old to have children, and entertained messengers from God in what seemed like a chance meeting. Yet from these two came Isaac and eventually the whole nation of Israel. There's another clue as well: disbelief. Sarah laughed when she overheard the messengers tell Abraham she would have a child. And now Zechariah disbelieves and so is rendered mute, not so much as a punishment but as a sign that when all these things come to pass so also will his speech be restored.

Why the elaborate literary set up? Because biblical authors, from the narrator of Genesis to Luke, love to point out that nothing is impossible for God. Barren? What of it – God is the giver of life. Old? So what – God is the one who renews all things. Chance encounters? Hah – not when God is involved. Disbelief? Come on – when it comes to the miraculous most of us are taken off guard.

So, feeling kind of ordinary, or beset by a challenge that seems overwhelming, or not sure you have it in you to do what you feel called to do? Well, get ready, because our God loves to take ordinary people facing ridiculous challenges and do extraordinary things through them. First it was Isaac, child of promise and laughter. Then it was John, set apart like the prophets of old to herald the coming Messiah. Next...Who knows? Maybe it will be you. If so, one word of advice. Just do what the angel says.

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

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, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen