

Today:
December 28, 2014

Scripture Focus: Luke 2:1-20

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ²(This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

⁶And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

¹⁵When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, ¹⁹but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. ²⁰The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

(Luke 2:1-20, New Living Translation)

Notes from Worship:

How did God catch your attention? To what is God calling you this week?

Questions for Discussion:

- In an awkward and very desperate situation away from home, with whom do you identify more in the story: Mary or Joseph?
- How do you think the shepherds first left the manger after their visit: bewildered? mystified? shocked? bubbling over with joy?

This Week:
December 29 – January 3

Scripture Readings:

Monday 12/29	Tuesday 12/30	Wednesday 12/31	Thursday 1/1	Friday 1/2	Saturday 1/3
2 Samuel 7, 1 Chron. 17, Psalm 1-2, 33, 127, 132	2 Samuel 8-9, 1 Chronicles 18	2 Samuel 10, 1 Chron. 19, Psalm 20, 53, 60, 75	Psalm 65-67, 69-70	2 Sam. 11-12, 1 Chron. 20, Psalm 51	Psalm 32, 86, 102-103, 122

Questions for Reflection:

These questions are meant to help get you thinking about the readings for each day. Feel free to also use this space to jot down other questions and insights gleaned from your reading.

Monday

What did it mean for God to establish an everlasting kingdom? (2 Samuel 7)

Tuesday

Why does David seek to show someone kindness for Jonathan's sake? (2 Samuel 9)

Wednesday

What do you think of all of David's conquests as king?

Thursday

What strikes you in these Psalms of David now that we've read about his conquests?

Friday

What catches your attention in this familiar story of David and Bathsheba? (2 Samuel 11-12)

Saturday

Take one of these Psalms and rewrite it in your own words to fit your own context.

Taking Scripture to Heart:

As we continue in seasons of Advent, Christmas and the life of Jesus, our memory texts change to the New Testament, beginning with **Hebrews 1:1-3a**. Let these verses dwell within you, to help you focus on Jesus Christ, the center of our faith.

Next Sunday: January 4, 2015

Theme: Epiphany – Magi visit the Christ child

Scripture Focus: Matthew 2:1-12