

Bible Reading for December 20

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ^{11b}Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶our house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Matthew 1:18-25 “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ^{23c}“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). ²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Discussion Questions

•*God coming to be with us is the heart of the advent story. Does anything stand out to you as you read this familiar passage? Where do you see God’s love for us?*

As you ponder these things in preparation for Sunday, I would love to hear what God is saying to you. Call me in the church office at 256-353-6941 or email me at miriam@centralunitedmethodist.com.



Love GOD



Love OTHERS



SERVE the World



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Musical Gift

And the Glory of the Lord

Handel

Welcome and Announcements

Advent Wreath

Tsubasa & Ally Ohki

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.*

“The LORD has done great things for us, and we are overjoyed. ... Let those who plant with tears reap the harvest with joyful shouts.” God of Joy, you enter the wilderness of our world and proclaim that there is a way to reach home again. God of Joy, you break through clouds of despair and sorrow to bring good news to your people. God of Joy, you send hope into the world in the form of a tiny baby.

We, God’s people, sing songs of joy with the prophet, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God” (Isaiah 61:10, NRSV).

On this third Sunday of Advent, we light this candle of joy, anticipating the fulfillment of God’s promise.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Miriam Smith

**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 for ever. Amen.**

The Magnificat

LouLou Greene as Mary

Bible Reading — Luke 1:46b-55

Rev. Miriam Smith

—[Prayer]

**Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed,
we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.**

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Message — “More Joy”

Rev. Miriam Smith

Closing Hymn #196 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Wesley

1. **Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**
2. **Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Benediction

Musical Gift

A Joyous Noel

Paxton

Organist: Virginia Paul

Welcome!

We are so happy to be here together! Here are a few guidelines for how we can worship safely together:

Please stay seated until the ushers come to guide you out of the Sanctuary. If you would like to make your offering while you are here today, there is an offering plate by the door. You may also continue to give using our website or by mailing a check.

In order to help keep everyone safe, please take your bulletins and any trash with you when you leave.

This service will be livestreamed on YouTube and a recording will be posted on social media for watching at a later time.