

DECEMBER 23, 2018  
FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT



*Rejoice in the Lord.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth
Monday	Matthew 1:18-25	Birth of Jesus
Tuesday	Luke 2:1-20	Jesus is born
Wednesday	John 1:1-14	The Word becomes flesh
Thursday	Micah 5:2-5a	A promised ruler
Friday	Hebrews 10:5-10	Christ's sacrifice once for all
Saturday	Psalms 80:1-7	Prayer for Israel's restoration
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 1:46-47 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

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

Dear God, fill us with the Holy Spirit as we embrace the good news. We rejoice in our Savior, Jesus Christ and the love you have shown us through this gift. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, bless our lives with love. As we enjoy your gifts of food this day, help us to give thanks for the gift of your coming into our world as Savior. Amen.

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

May you rejoice in God your Savior Jesus Christ; may your Savior bless you and look with favor on you. (Luke 1:47-48)



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK



*Come Now, O Prince  
of Peace*



### CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How do you tell or show someone you love them?
- Mary and Elizabeth supported each other. How do you support others? How are you supported by others?
- Mary's song states, "my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior." How do you show or express your love for God?

### DEVOTIONS



*Read:* Luke 1:39-55.

Sometimes it takes a life that has experienced and knows hardships to truly know what it means to be delivered. Mary, a young peasant girl speaks on behalf of the lowly (vv. 48, 52), those who know hunger of many forms (v. 53), when she sings her song of praise to God. And, yes, as the mother of our Savior Jesus, all future generations will honor Mary and call her blessed by God (v. 48). She speaks for herself and for us and we give thanks for God's work in her that lifts up the lowly while the proud are sent away. In humility and in recognition of our need of the Savior, we, too, can join Mary's song, a love song filled with passion for life and for faith in God. What words in Mary's song, the Magnificat, speaks most powerfully to you?

*Pray:* **Magnificent God, we praise you for lifting up Mary and for giving us a Savior through your lowly servant. Bless us with humble hearts that are filled with joy for your goodness. Amen.**

### SERVICE



Is there room for more at your meal table this Christmas? Be on the lookout for someone who may be alone at this festive time, and invite them to join you, either on Christmas Day or the days after. Students, single adults, recent immigrants, widows, widowers, and elderly persons can feel particularly lonely at Christmas time.

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The fourth candle on the Advent wreath is the candle of revelation and love. Discuss or think about the love that Jesus brings to the world. Read Luke 2:10-14 and after lighting all four candles on your Advent wreath, say the following:

*Leader:* **In Mary's song of praise, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47), she expresses her love and revelation that all generations will call her blessed.**

*All:* **Mary's song expresses love for God and rejoices in all that God does for those in need.**

*Leader:* **Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving us so much. Fill our lives with love this Christmas. Amen.**



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