

DECEMBER 20, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



God favors the peasant girl Mary.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold
Monday	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	The Lord's message to David
Tuesday	Romans 16:25-27	Paul's closing prayer
Wednesday	Luke 1:46b-55	Mary's song of praise
Thursday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Friday	John 3:11-16	For God so loved the world
Saturday	Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26	God's promise to David
Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus." Luke 1:30-31 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, just as you favored your servant Mary, grant all of us faith and trust in your power to bring salvation to all through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

With this food we receive your steadfast love, O Lord; with our mouths we proclaim your faithfulness to all generations through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 89:1)

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you with the good news of Jesus' birth.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

Wait for the Lord



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:

- When have you received special attention from friends or family?
- Think of someone you have valued as a friend. In what ways do you value them?
- The angel Gabriel describes Mary as favored. What does it mean to you that God has given the world our Savior and Lord Jesus through Mary, a young peasant girl?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Luke 1:26-38.

In verses 28 and 30 the angel Gabriel says that Mary is favored, that is, Mary experiences the undeserved kindness of God. In Luke 2:40 and 52 the child Jesus is also described as favored. Divine attention comes to a young virgin to deliver Jesus, the Son of the Most High. The beginning of the Gospel of Luke tells of Elizabeth, a barren woman who gives birth, Mary, a peasant girl who gives birth to the future king in the lineage of David, and of shepherds in the field who will be the first evangelists of the good news of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:18). The message is clear: with God all things are possible, and as with Mary, our faithful response is, "let it be with me according to your word" (v. 38). Mary is the model of the life of faith that acknowledges that God has done great things for her. As we prepare to enter the season of Jesus' birth, we are met with God's favor and blessings for us as well. How has God come to you with divine favor?

Pray: God of undeserved kindness, give us faith to trust that with you all things are possible through Christ Jesus our Lord, Son of the Most High God. Amen.

SERVICE



During this Advent season think of those who are not favored in our society. For example, the homeless are poor, hungry, and in need. In what ways can you show God's love to them through an act of kindness?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



From your nativity set, hold each piece in silence for a moment. Then place the pieces back in the scene. Have Mary and Joseph arrive first, followed by the shepherds and then the wise men. Wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, the third one of joy, and the fourth one of love. *Say this Bible verse:* For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Pray: Lord God, thank you for showing us love even when we are afraid like Mary, the mother of Jesus. Give us hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.



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