

ADVENT @ HOME

A 6-WEEK JOURNEY IN SONG



Corona United Methodist Church

Prepared by Pastor Eric Schmidt



WEEK 1: ZECHARIAH

A SONG OF PROMISE

THEME FOR THE DAY: WE CAN RELY ON GOD'S PROMISES

Usually, we think of Mary, Joseph and the angel Gabriel at the beginning of the Advent narrative. You're invited to approach Advent a little differently, sitting for a while with Zechariah and Elizabeth in silence. They struggled to have their only son, John. They wrestled with what it means to live, work and still trust in God, even when their situation seemed hopeless. God's promise worked in their lives in an amazing way, bringing tears of joy, praise and anticipation.

Gather and greet each other

Have fun! We invite you to wear a holiday hat

LIGHT ONE LUMINARIA CANDLE (*please be safe*) – together we travel to the manger

Join with us online or simply light the candle and sing a song

SING A CHRISTMAS SONG

Pick your household favorite or try one of our favorites (email us for YouTube links)

MAKE THE NATIVITY BOX

Write prayers or special wishes on a slip of papers or make a drawing and put them inside. Stack boxes each week to make a nativity scene.

READ SCRIPTURE VERSE: Luke 1:67-79

A question for conversation: What does God's promise mean to us today?

SING ANOTHER CHRISTMAS SONG

Pick your household favorite or try one of our favorites (see the list)

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

Support Mozart Adevu, UMCOR or other United Methodist ministries on Giving Tuesday (Dec. 1st). Here's the link: umcmmission.org/give/ . Please note gifts given on Giving Tuesday are often matched (see web site for details).

PRAYER

Praise be to the Lord, who in God's infinite wisdom uses all creation to fulfill a magnificent plan for us. Help me Lord to be your willing servant ready to be the vessel of choice for your Holy purpose. This is my fervent prayer. Amen.

WEEK 2: MARY

A SONG OF FAITH



THEME FOR DAY: OUR FAITH IN GOD MAKES IMPOSSIBLE THINGS POSSIBLE

From the silence of Zechariah and Elizabeth, we move to the first disciple Mary. God became flesh and lived among us because Mary believed and had faith in God. Mary is a model for those who are called to receive and share Jesus. When we look at Mary, we see that God wants Christ to grow and be seen in each of us. As Jesus is born in your heart, you offer him to others. Like Mary, God comes to us with the assurance “nothing is impossible with God.” Our fear and anxiety will fade away as we sing of our joy with love.

GATHER AND GREET EACH OTHER

Have fun! We invite you to wear funny slippers or shoes

LIGHT 1ST & 2ND LUMINARIA CANDLES (please be safe) – together we travel to the manger. Join with us online or simply light the candle and sing a song

CHRISTMAS SONG “MARY DID YOU KNOW?” (email us for YouTube links)

Pick your household favorite or try this one – the video is good

ADD 2ND NATIVITY BOX

Write special wishes on slips of paper and put them inside. Stack boxes each week to make a nativity scene.

READ SCRIPTURE VERSE: *Luke 1:46-55*

QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: What impossible thing are you willing to turn over to God?

SING ANOTHER CHRISTMAS SONG “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Pick your household favorite or try a different version of a classic (see the list)

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

Not sure what to give this year? Check out our Alternative Christmas opportunities in the “Sweet Extras” folder.

PRAYER

Mary realized the enormity of the gift God was giving her. She recognized the magnificence of God’s plans, her role in them, her humble state as she glorified God’s name. How humble is our spirit, how mighty are your deeds, O God. You bring the might down and lift up the humble, never forgetting them. Your mercy is with those of us in need from the beginning of time to forever. Amen.

WEEK 3: JOSEPH

A SONG OF TRUST



THEME FOR DAY: TRUST GOD WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS

The faith of Mary overshadows the wavering of Joseph. At least at first. On his own, Joseph was ready to walk away. He trusted his own wisdom and was on the brink of saying “no.” No to marriage, no to this life, no to playing a secondary role in the narrative of salvation. No muss, no fuss. Funny thing; Joseph was seen as a righteous person. He’s caught between what the law said and what love said. Then Joseph listened to God. And suddenly, he knew what to do. Joseph trusted God, trusted in faith and trusted enough to name the child ... Jesus.

GATHER AND GREET EACH OTHER

*Have fun! We invite you to wear that ugly Christmas sweater
Today we celebrate December birthdays and anniversaries – sing along!*

LIGHT 1ST, 2ND & 3RD LUMINARIA CANDLES (please be safe) – together we travel to the manger. Join with us for ZOOM church or simply light the candle and sing a song

CHRISTMAS SONG “Little Drummer Boy” (email us for YouTube links)

Pick your household favorite or try the cool African tribal version

ADD 3RD NATIVITY BOX

Have a scavenger hunt for things reminding you of baby Jesus to fit in the box.

READ SCRIPTURE VERSE: MATTHEW 1:18-24

QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: What is God’s Spirit asking you to do that you don’t understand?

SING ANOTHER CHRISTMAS SONG “Breath of Heaven”

Pick your household favorite or try this modern classic

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

Our thoughts turn to the needs of community of faith. Check out our “Sweet Extras” folder or do your own household project helping someone in the neighborhood.

PRAYER

Following the advice of the angels of the Lord in a dream, Joseph married Mary. The angel of the Lord told Joseph they would have a son conceived by the Holy Spirit and they should call him Emmanuel. Once again they followed what the angels told them and found safety. Joseph and Mary put their trust in these angelic messengers who offered them hope and care. May we be as trustful and as responsive. Amen.



WEEK 4: ELIZABETH

A SONG OF BLESSINGS

THEME FOR THE DAY: LOOK FORWARD TO GOD'S BLESSINGS WITH ANTICIPATION

From the silence of Zechariah to the quiet faith of Mary to the trust of Joseph, we are led to the exuberant, joyful greeting of Elizabeth. We've come full circle through family and friends who have accompanied us and are coming back to see God's promise is true. The impossible, shameful and unwise can be used to bring honor and praise to God. What blessings God gives us to pay forward with joy!

GATHER AND GREET EACH OTHER

Relax! We invite you to wear something comfortable. Coffee is a plus.

LIGHT 1ST – 4TH LUMINARIA CANDLES (please be safe) – we're almost to the manger.

CHRISTMAS SONG "What Child Is This?" (email us for YouTube links)

Pick your household favorite or try the jazzy Vanessa Williams rendition

ADD 4TH NATIVITY BOX

WRITE A NOTE TO JESUS ABOUT A FRIEND AND PUT IT IN THE BOX.

READ SCRIPTURE VERSE: Luke 1:39-45

QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: What sing from God would cause you to "leap for joy" and begin to share blessings and excitement with your household?

SING ANOTHER CHRISTMAS SONG "Carol of the Bells"

Pick your household favorite or try this update of the modern classic

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

You're invited to join us for Blue Christmas at 7 pm via ZOOM, a time for those who do not find the holidays a time for joy. Check out our "Sweet Extras" folder or keep doing your own household project helping someone in the neighborhood.

PRAYER

Mary went to Zachariah and Elizabeth's home. When Mary arrived the baby within Elizabeth's body leapt for joy acknowledging the baby Mary was carrying as our Savior and Lord. Elizabeth and all who look for God's presence with anticipation are blessed by the Lord at this promise. Praise be to God. Amen.

WEEK 5: ANGELS & CREATION

SONGS OF PRAISE & PEACE



THEME FOR DAY: PEACE BE WITH YOU

We confess our preoccupied with proof. All too often, we muffle faith and turn our attention to proof. We won't move if we can't see it, hear it, touch it or know it with our senses. The powerful narrative we have in Jesus coming requires something extra, a spiritual sense. We have faith in what we can't see, hear, touch or know. That's the mystery of this day. It gives us life beyond. It's a demonstration that God keeps promises. Best of all, it happens with love.

Praise God!

GATHER AND GREET EACH OTHER

We invite you to dress in pajamas for storytelling or in something nice for the more adult portion.

LIGHT 1ST – 5TH LUMINARIA CANDLES (please be safe) – we're at the manger.

CHRISTMAS SONG "O Holy Night" or "We Wish You a Merry Christmas"

Pick your household favorite or check our list. There are a lot of options.

ADD 5TH NATIVITY BOX – How does it look?

Draw your own version of the nativity (who you would invite there) and put it in the box.

READ SCRIPTURE: *Luke 2:8-20* (Christmas Eve), *John 20:19-21* (Christmas Day)

QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: What possibilities and options does Christmas bring to mind?

SING A SONG: Christmas Eve "Silent Night", Christmas Day "Joy to the World"

Pick your household favorite. We do recommend the classic

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

You're invited to join us for our online Christmas Eve service at 8:00 pm or for a quiet devotion at 10:00 am Christmas Day. Today's a day for relationships.

Most of all, take time to be with God so your spirit can rest.

PRAYER

An angel appeared to shepherds in the fields announcing the birth of the savior of the world. The angels gave direction to the shepherds so they could find the baby while the angels sang songs of praise. The shepherds left to honor Jesus and to spread the good news. Praise God! Jesus is our God and guide. Amen.



WEEK 6: SIMEON & ANNA, SONGS OF HOPE

THEME FOR DAY: PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD

We come full circle. We are back in the presence of God, but now Mary and Joseph have a baby with them: Jesus. They know he's special, but don't yet understand how much Jesus will mean to others. The response of Simeon and Anna amazes them. These two people, who are like fixtures, cast a vision that stuns and amazes the parents and we, the readers. Even today, the power of their vision and the message of God fulfilling their deepest hope strikes a chord.

Faith, hope and love; the greatest is love.

GATHER AND GREET EACH OTHER

Have some fun! We invite you to dress for a birthday party. Blow up some balloons and bat them around.

LIGHT ALL SIX LUMINARIA CANDLES (*please be safe*) – *the journey continues*

CHRISTMAS SONG “*Happy Birthday Jesus*”

Pick your household favorite or check our list. There are a lot of options.

ADD 6TH NATIVITY BOX – Great job!

Write a birthday card to Jesus and put it in the box.

READ SCRIPTURE: *Luke 2:25-40*

QUESTION FOR CONVERSATION: How does Jesus coming give you hope?

SING ANOTHER SONG “*We Three Kings*”

Pick your household favorite. We do recommend the classic

ENGAGE IN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE:

Check out our “Sweet Extras” folder or invite others to help you with your own household project helping someone in the neighborhood.

PRAYER

Jesus, you are love even if we are afraid. Help us to pray to you even when we are scared or fearful. Bring love into our hearts we pray. Amen.