

# Central Lutheran Church

## Narrative Lectionary Bible Study

### Fall, 2020

#### Welcome

We are off and running on our weekly Zoom Bible study, rooted in the narrative lectionary. A few quick reminders, if needed:

1. The narrative lectionary was developed with the goal of hearing lessons that we do not often encounter in the common lectionary. This year we will “travel” through the history of God’s love for the world.
2. These Bible studies are more holy conversations. No previous knowledge is expected, in fact it helps to seek to enter the study as if for the first time.
3. You are invited to attend the Zoom study each week, but the invitation is always open for when it works in your schedule.
4. Christ Care Prayers begin each lesson, it is a time when we pray for one another and the needs of the world. If you have a prayer concern that you do not want to share in front of the group, you can send a private chat to the pastor who is leading the study.
5. Yep, we will break out into conversation groups. Have no fear, one of the pastors will be in each of the groups to help facilitate the conversation.
6. Thank you for joining this Bible study, these holy conversations.

#### Schedule

September 9 - Genesis 2: 4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 (Creation and “fall”)

September 16 - Genesis 15: 1-6 (God’s promise to Abraham/ Sarah)

September 23 - Genesis 37: 3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21 (Joseph’s dreams)

September 30 - Exodus 12:1-3; 13:1-8 (Passover)

October 7 - Exodus 32: 1-14 (Golden Calf)

October 14 - 1 Samuel 1: 9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10 (Hannah and Samuel)

October 21 - 2 Samuel 7: 1-17 (David)

October 28 - 1 Kings 17: 1-24 (Elijah and the widow)

November 4 - Jonah 1:1-17; 3: 1-10; 4:1-11 (Jonah)

November 11 - Isaiah 6: 1-8 (Holy, Holy, Holy)

November 18 - Jeremiah 36: 1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31: 31-34 (New Covenant)

November 25 – NO Zoom Study, Thanksgiving Weekend

December 2 - Joel 2:12-13, 28-29 (Merciful God, promise of Spirit)

December 9 - Isaiah 61: 1-11 (Spirit of the Lord)

**December 16 - Luke 1:26-45, 46-56 (Annunciation and Magnificat)**

December 23 – NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

December 30 – NO Zoom Study, Christmas break

January 6 – Zoom Study Resumes

## **Narrative Study for Wednesday, December 16**

### **Welcome**

### **Christ Care Prayers**

### **Overview of the study and the narrative lectionary**

### **Tonight's Reading: Luke 1:26-45, 46-56 (Annunciation and Magnificat)**

We have heard these words before. An angel coming to announce a pregnancy is a rather common occurrence in scripture. This is how we learn about the soon to be born Ishmael (Gen. 16:7-13), Isaac (Gen. 17:1-21; 18:1-15), Samson (Judges 13:3-20) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:8-20).

The response Mary has about what this child means to the world is reminiscent of Hannah's song over Samuel's birth (1 Sam. 2:1-10). Both women describe themselves as God's servant. Both women praise God for the ways the oppressed have been lifted up.

For all the ways in which this story and praise of God feels familiar, we should not be quick to forget that this child is different. This pregnancy is peculiar. This

birth is miraculous. This is God coming into the world. Mary is concerned and confused about how this will all happen too. She asks the angel Gabriel one important and practical question, and then she gives her consent for her life and the whole world to be changed.

When Mary visits Elizabeth and finds her pregnant and already with special knowledge about what is happening with Mary, she responds with this beautiful poem. We call it the Magnificat from the Latin translation of the word magnifies. Mary calls herself “lowly” and in her being blessed she blesses all those who too see themselves as lowly. She reminds all of us that our God is strong and righteous and putting the world back into order, and God has not forgotten God’s people and the promises made to Abraham and his descendants.

### *Lectio Divina*

One of the oldest ways to enter into the holy conversation at a Bible study is to spend time reading the lesson slowly, and at least three times. This fall you will be invited to this way of reading called “lectio divina,” or divine reading. You can read the lesson silently, or even out loud if you are in a quiet place. There are many ways to engage in *lectio divina*, here is one way to consider:

1. The first time simply read the lesson for the information, the story that is being shared. At the end of the reading, what did you notice? What was interesting, or confusing? What was familiar or unfamiliar?
2. The second time, slow down and perhaps circle words that stay with you or even underline a sentence that jumps out at you. Here you begin to read with your heart, along with your mind. What emotions do you notice as you read and respond or react to the lesson?
3. The third and final time, really slow down. Perhaps you pause or stop at a verse, linger there. Here you begin to read with your soul. What is God or the LORD GOD saying in, with and under this story? What is God or the LORD GOD not saying, in other words, is God speaking or does it seem more like human interpretation at this point. What is liberating or what is troubling? How are you open to God as you pause for this third reading?
4. Be sure to write down what you may have learned and the questions you may have at this point. Note what emotions were stirred up and what you may want to ponder. Note how the lesson draws you to God, how are you opened or where are you restless.

## Luke 1:26-45, 46-56

### Annunciation and Magnificat

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

<sup>56</sup>And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

## Conversation and Questions

1. What questions does this story bring up for you? What did you notice for the first time in this reading?
2. How do these stories make you feel? Notice your body when you read it, are there places you are holding the tension? Where are the moments of release in these stories?
3. How is God present in these stories? What do you hear God saying to you through these stories? What do you hear God saying to our whole community?
4. What more do you want to discuss with others about these stories? How are you called to integrate or share what you have learned?