

## FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

A reading from second Samuel.

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I 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. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" <sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

## PSALM: Luke 1:46b–55

*Cantor sings refrain. Assembly repeats refrain. Cantor sings verses. Assembly sings refrain at R.*



<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness <sup>1</sup>of the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in <sup>1</sup>God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup>for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your <sup>1</sup>lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will <sup>1</sup>call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great <sup>1</sup>things for me,  
and holy <sup>1</sup>is your name.  
<sup>50</sup>You have mercy on <sup>1</sup>those who fear you,  
from generation to <sup>1</sup>generation. **R**  
<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength <sup>1</sup>with your arm;  
and scattered the proud in <sup>1</sup>their conceit,  
<sup>52</sup>casting down the mighty <sup>1</sup>from their thrones  
and lifting <sup>1</sup>up the lowly.

<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry | with good things,  
and sent the rich | away empty.  
<sup>54</sup>You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,  
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,  
<sup>55</sup>the promise made | to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

## **SECOND READING: Romans 16:25–27**

A reading from Romans.

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

## **GOSPEL: Luke 1:26–38**

<sup>26</sup>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.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS:**



These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. We invite you to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold
Monday	Luke 1:46-55	Mary's song
Tuesday	Luke 1:57-66	The birth of John the Baptist
Wednesday	Luke 1:67-80	Zechariah's song
Thursday	Isaiah 9:2-7	To us a child is born
Friday	Titus 2:11-14	God's grace has appeared
Saturday	Luke 2:1-7	The birth of Jesus
Sunday	Luke 2:8-20	Angels appear to shepherds

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK:**

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." **Luke 1:38 (CEV)**

**SAY, PRAY AND BLESS:**

**A Prayer for the Week:**

Lord God, we are your servants. Make us ready to accept your plans for us. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come to our table.  
Come into our hearts. Fill us with your love. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May the Lord be with you. May God's favor rest on you and the Holy Spirit come to you. Amen.

### CARING CONVERSATION:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- How do you think Mary felt when the angel Gabriel appeared to her?
- Mary was given some amazing news that would change her life forever. How do you think you would have responded?
- Have you ever felt challenged by God to do something difficult?
- Read Luke 1:38. What can we learn from Mary's response?

### DEVOTIONS:

In your home devotion times in the days remaining before Christmas, light all four blue or purple candles on your household Advent wreath and use the following liturgy:

Leader: "In the fourth week of Advent we light four candles – the candles of hope, peace, joy and love. We are getting ready to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, who is love."

On each day before Christmas Day, have a different household member read a bible passage about love: Psalm 36:5, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:9, John 3:16. Talk about the passage. Then, form a circle by joining hands around the candles and conclude with these words:

Leader: "Our household is a circle that is held together by God's love."  
Response: "Come, Lord Jesus, and fill us with your love. Amen."

On Christmas Day, light the white center candle. Read Luke 2:1-7 and say together with joy the words of the angels from Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

### SERVICE:

Plan to visit a person who is homebound or in a nursing home on Christmas Day. Prepare a gift to bring them and sing a Christmas carol to them.

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS:

Place figures from a Christmas nativity set (e.g. wise men, shepherds, Mary, Joseph, animals) throughout your home. During this week, move them closer to the manger. Have Mary and Joseph arrive first, followed by the shepherds and wise men. Last of all, place Jesus in the manger (on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day).