

PREPARING AT HOME

December 3-9, 2018

Focus reading: Luke 1:68–79 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=409221963>)

Other lectionary readings: Malachi 3:1–4; Philippians 1:3–11; Luke 3:1–6

Theme: The Sound of a Promise Kept

In order to appreciate the song of praise that is this week's focus reading we need to know the backstory. The song belongs to a joyful Zechariah and is the result of a faith journey filled with ups and downs. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and childless when the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that he and Elizabeth will have a son. In and of itself, that is miraculous news! But there is more! Their son will be a prophet and will prepare the people for the promised savior. Upon hearing the news, rather than burst into a song of praise, a disbelieving Zechariah asks for proof. As a result, Gabriel prevents Zechariah from speaking until after the child is born. So, this song of praise has been months in the making – years if you consider the agony of a couple who longed for a child and centuries if you consider the plight of generations of God's people who anticipated the one God would send to save them. Zechariah's initial response is a human one. It is difficult to hope when the circumstances are grim, but God does bring joy. When John, who would later become John the Baptist, was born, Zechariah released a song of praise that could not be silenced!

THE GIFT OF A CHILD

When Zechariah sees his newborn son he knows that God will use this child for something special. Share stories of what it was like to greet your child for the first time. Like Zechariah, did you praise God for this gift? Did you think about the person your child would become and how God might use this child in the world? Share pictures and talk about that special time.

PREPARE

John would prepare the people for Jesus by guiding them in the way of peace and calling them to make changes in their lives so that they could follow in God's way. How can we prepare people for Jesus during Advent? John was a messenger. What is your message? What message would you like to share with the world? Draw it on a banner and add it to your Christmas decorations.

Continue to light Advent candles or to celebrate the season in whatever way you have chosen.

PRAYER

Loving God,
We thank you for your messengers who share your teachings and love with us
and pray that we would be your messengers, too.
Use us to prepare the world for Christ.
Use us to prepare a path of
love, peace, and justice.
Amen.

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