

Love: How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?
Learn: What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?
Share: What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

Monday December 19th – Read Luke 1:26-38. Mary hears some very terrifying news. Would Joseph believe her? Would she be strong enough to raise a child with so much at stake? She was more concerned about the appearance of a baby than the destiny of the child, “How can this be?” She accepted the arrangement on faith and said that she would serve God. While we typically don’t receive angelic notification when God is asking for our trust, what is the most recent outrageous thing for you that required faith to complete?

Tuesday, December 20th – Read Luke 1:39-45. Mary was the younger cousin of Elizabeth. Because Mary was engaged to Joseph, in their culture the pregnancy under engagement was not a scandal. More than likely, Mary was coming to help Elizabeth. What might that have been like? To know that God was going to use your child, then have Elizabeth affirm the sacredness with her own baby, was extraordinary. How does God use your friends or family to help you remember the sacred in your everyday life?

Wednesday, December 21st – Read Luke 1:46-56. Called the “Magnificat” or “Mary’s Song,” this selection for centuries has been the reminder of Jesus’ social mandate. This is also the more poetic celebration of Mary’s obedience to God. Look through the promises for change in this world that Mary identifies. Are there any that still need to happen today? What would it look like for Jesus to make changes in our world today in line with his mother’s song? And on a completely different note, this passage is the answer to the question, ‘Mary, did you know?’ Yes. She did.

Thursday, December 22nd – Read Luke 2:1-7. The Scripture is clear that Joseph is not the father for the baby Jesus. Look at how many times the phrase “her” child is used (NRSV). Luke says that Jesus was placed in a manger, a large stone basin used to feed the livestock but not what sort of building. In Bethlehem today you can enter into a large stone cave where it is held that Jesus was born. Peasants would use natural shelter to store food

and livestock and avoid extra costs for construction. In fact, if you pay close attention, the cave where he was born then sent out as the light for humanity is very similar to the tombs carved out of the rock where he would be resurrected to be the salvation for humanity.

Friday, December 23rd – Read Luke 2:8-20. The most disgusting sub-humans in Jesus’ day, even lower than children were shepherds, close to tax collectors. Why would God send angels to invite shepherds to celebrate the birth of Jesus? Why not just families close by in houses? Shepherds were considered to be without honor because they left their families to tend the sheep. Maybe the connection was with David, the ultimate shepherd. Maybe it was the foreshadowing of Jesus being the Good Shepherd. Regardless, we cannot miss the intentional invitation to the least and the last to the most important birth in human history. What does this teach us about God’s love for the poor? How should we see the poor from this light?

Saturday, December 24th – Read Luke 2:22-36. Luke does not mention the Wise Men from the East but goes right into the fulfillment of God’s promises, God’s saving purpose, in Jesus Christ. For Luke, the birth of Jesus in a cave with shepherd’s present and then presented at the Temple was very important. It reminds us that Christ comes for the religious relationship between God and humanity as well as to connect humanity of all types together through Christ. Be sure to notice how Joseph is used now. Now he is the father of Jesus. For me it is a reminder as a father that my children belong to God, they are first and foremost children of God. Then they are given to me as their father to care for them and instruct them in the ways of Christ. What does this shift from Mary’s child to the child of Mary and Joseph?

Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

Healing Strength: Rex Townsend, Stan Ensch, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb’s daughter), Janet Coons (Donna McCullough’s daughter)

Homebound Members: Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

Military Personnel: Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark