

DECEMBER 31, 2017
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
CHRISTMAS DAY



We praise God for Christ's birth.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple
Monday	Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3	Rejoice in the Lord
Tuesday	Galatians 4:4-7	Adoption as God's children
Wednesday	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	For everything a season
Thursday	2 Corinthians 6:1-10	Now is the time of salvation
Friday	Isaiah 43:16-21	The Lord is doing a new thing
Saturday	Psalms 148	All creation praises God
Sunday	Mark 1:4-11	Baptism of Christ

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

At that moment [Anna] came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:38 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, thank you for Jesus, through whom we are adopted as your children. Let all you have made praise you! Amen. (Galatians 4:5 and Psalm 148)

Mealtime Prayer:

Praise the Lord all children, women, and men. For God gives us food for our bodies and Jesus as our Savior. Amen. (Psalm 148:12-13)

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord make you strong and wise and bless you with God's saving grace. (Luke 2:40)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

O Come All Ye Faithful



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell about when you waited a long time for something. What was it like waiting, and what was it like when the waiting was over?
- What do you think Mary was feeling after the birth of Jesus?
- When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus in the temple, they praised God. What would you have done when you saw Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 148.

Read the psalm three times slowly with reflective pauses between the readings. What word or phrase captures your thinking and imagination? The psalm encourages all that God has created to give praise to God. Use this psalm as a basis for writing your own psalm of praise honoring Christ's birth. Use familiar images and ideas.

Pray: Lord God, thank you for Jesus, through whom we are adopted as your children. Let all you have made praise you! Amen.

SERVICE

In the temple in Jerusalem, Simeon and Anna encouraged and blessed two young, first-time parents, Mary and Joseph. Think of some way of supporting parents of young children in your congregation or community.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Take time this New Year's Eve to reflect on the past year with family and friends. As the evening proceeds, talk about your memories together. What have you learned from your experiences this past year, and how does it connect with your faith in Jesus Christ? As you begin the new year, commit yourself to regular faith practices. Consider prayer, blessing others, and reading scripture daily. It becomes a way of life. Mealtime and bedtime prayers are a good place to start. What tradition will you begin this year as part of your faith journey?



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org