

**FIRST READING**

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah

5:1-3

**T**own of Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
 you are one of the smallest in the nation of Judah.  
 But I will choose one of your people to rule the nation.  
 And his family goes back to ancient times.

The Lord will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born  
 and the rest of his family come back to join Israel.

He will stand like a shepherd feeding his sheep  
 by the power and glorious name of the Lord his God.  
 His people will live in peace,  
 and everyone on earth will know how great the Lord is.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

80:1 acdef and 2c, 14-15ab

*R. (3) Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us.*

Shepherd of Israel,  
 you sit on your throne  
 above the winged creatures.  
 Listen to our prayer  
 and let your light shine.  
 Save us by your power.

*R. Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us.*

God All-Powerful,  
 please do something!  
 Look down from heaven  
 and see what's happening to this vine.  
 With your own hands  
 you planted its roots.

*R. Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us.*

## **ALLELUIA**

Luke 1:38

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

I am the servant of the Lord:  
let it be done to me according to your word.

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

## **GOSPEL**

Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

1:39-45

**M**ary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea.  
She went into Zechariah's home,  
where she greeted Elizabeth.  
When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,  
her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth.  
Then in a loud voice she said to Mary:  
"God has blessed you more than any other woman!  
He has also blessed the child you will have.  
Why should the mother of my Lord come to me?  
As soon as I heard your greeting,  
my baby became happy and moved within me.  
The Lord has blessed you because you believed  
that he will keep his promise."

The gospel of the Lord.

## Fourth Sunday of Advent Cycle C

**We can give the gift of God's love.**  
(Review Advent Activities Section)

**Prayer:** Dear God, we love you so much. We know you love us very much too because you sent, Jesus, to us! Jesus was born with your life and love and so are we. Help us to grow to be like Jesus—to be full of love. Thank you, God for loving us. AMEN.

**Readings:** Micah 5:1-4a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

**Reflection:** Micah expresses joy that the Messiah will come from among the people of this little town of shepherds. Mary turns to her cousin Elizabeth for comfort and courage—not to her mother or the temple! Both these stories make it clear that God's ways are with the simple, humble and good people of the earth—not the powerful, rich or most popular. Why does our God, time and again, choose the ordinary to be the way of manifesting the Divine? Perhaps it says more about us being surprised and not realizing God is not about anything else!

**Activities: We can give the gift of God's love.** Review the process of coming to this Sunday: The signs of the coming of the Son of Man, John the Baptist, Mary and Elizabeth. Talk about all the ways the children have prepared for Jesus' birth. Then point out the significance of the angels, shepherds, creation, being sent away from the inn, as well as Mary, Joseph and Jesus' humble beginnings. Remind the children to be thankful for the presence of their loved ones even as much as they are appreciative of their presents.

**To Conclude the Session:** Remember: We say the same prayer because we are celebrating God's love for us, shown in a very special way in Jesus' birth and then in all of us!

**Prayer:** Dear God, we love you so much. We know you love us very much too because you sent, Jesus, to us! Jesus was born with your life and love and so are we. Help us to grow to be like Jesus—to be full of love. Thank you, God for loving us. AMEN.

**KEY WORDS TAKEN FROM ALL THREE SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS:** Bethlehem, Judah, Israel, ancient times, birth, shepherd, peace, coming into the world, God's will, Covenant, Mary, Zechariah, Elizabeth, Holy Spirit, blest among women, baby leapt in her womb, trust fulfilled promise