

HOPING

Awakened by the Word we turn now towards the Lord

1. What prayer has been stirred by this text that you wish to place before God?
2. What word about life—be it a word of thanksgiving, sorrow, joy, peace, petition do you now bring before God?
3. Pause and praise God for the moments of joyful surprise in your life, a new born baby, moments of togetherness with family and friends.

We gather together our prayer as we say:

Gracious God, we thank you for the wonder of your way. Open our eyes and our heart to the gift of your Son, our Saviour and Lord, as we say,

Our Father.....



***Our deepest prayer is one that rises from the heart
in response to the realities of life. (Michael Casey)***

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Hearing Happening Hoping

Journey with God's Word at Christmas (Luke 2: 1-14)



The Word of God comes to us to awaken our hearts. That is why we begin by praying: Lord, you dwell deeply within us all, your Spirit welling up in us, drawing us home to you. Open our hearts this day to *hear* your word, to *meet* your Son, to *long* for YOU. In the presence of the Lord we read:

Luke 2: 1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

“The coming of God in Christ still continues today...” Maria Boulding

HEARING ~ *Speak Lord, your servants are listening!* You have the words of eternal life!

*We read the passage 2-3 times. Reflect and share on **some** of the following:*

1. What do you see happening in this passage? What surprises you? What unsettles you?
2. This story occurs in a particular moment in history. What is it?
3. In the passage, Luke points to two kinds of power: the power of the Emperor and the power of the child. What is the difference between these two powers?
4. To whom is the announcement of the birth of the Messiah made? For whom is this birth good news?



HAPPENING ~ *Speak Lord, your servants are listening!* The coming of God continues today.

*Read the text again and reflect and share on **some** of the following:*

1. “... a decree went out from Emperor Augustus.” What empires and decrees have an impact on people’s lives today?
2. “Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to ... a city of David called Bethlehem...”
Joseph went back to the roots of his identity. What brings us back to our roots? Crisis? Political change?
3. “In that region there were shepherds living in the fields...” The angel appears to the shepherds who are on the margins of society. Who are the unexpected messengers of good news in our world?
4. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host...” When have we been moved to praise God? When have we been stirred to hope?

