

# *Third Week of Advent*

Immanuel, God with Us



 **Light the First and Second Dark Candles, and the Light Candle**

 **Opening Prayer and Song**

*Heavenly Father, as we draw closer to Christmas, increase our love for You, grow our faith and fill us with hope! In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
Rector Phillip Brooks/Louis Redner

*O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight*

*For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love  
O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And Peace to men on earth*

*How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven. No ear  
may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born to us today  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell  
O come to us, abide with us  
Our Lord Emmanuel*

## Devotional

Joseph worked as an ordinary carpenter, a trade he would teach his adopted son, Jesus. He tried to obey God *in everything* and lived as an “honest citizen.” So when Caesar ordered Joseph to report to his hometown, the expense and inconvenience would not stop him.

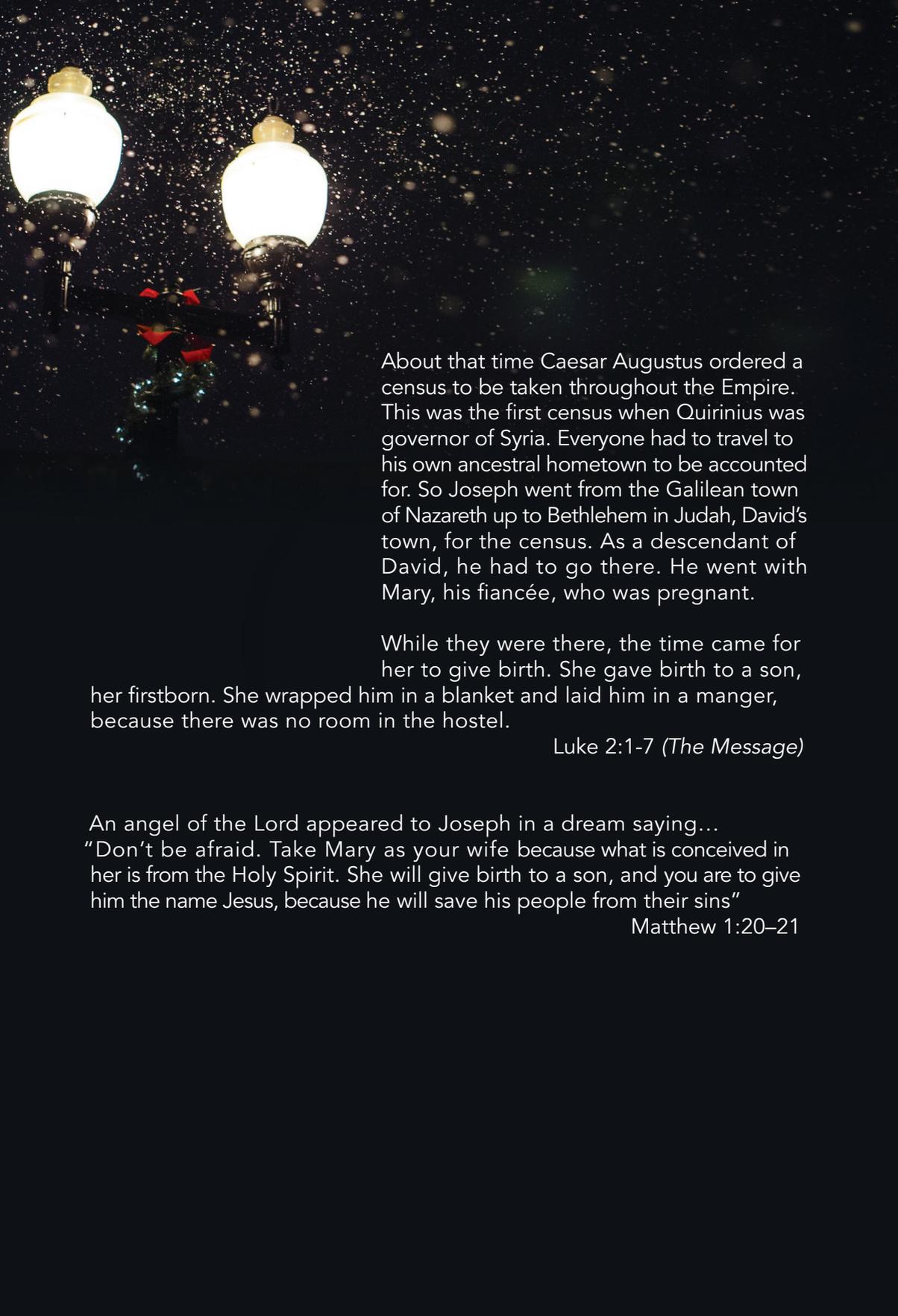
The danger this 90 mile journey brought to his fiancée weighed heavily on his heart, especially since she was close to giving birth. In the bigger picture, little did he know all that God planned. The “accidental” events of history can become acts of destiny. The baby would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, according to the prophecy of the Old Testament. Little actions can have great significance. God promised that a King would come out of Bethlehem and Caesar’s decree put the parents in the right place at the right time. This is another miracle!

*Little did Joseph  
know all that God  
had planned.*

The angel that appeared to Joseph emphasized the importance of Jesus’ name: “For it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is the Greek name which means “God saves”. Also, he would be called Immanuel which means “God with us.”

Joseph was an ordinary, hard-working carpenter that God would use in EXTRA-ordinary ways. God wants to use us too. Let's read more of the Christmas story.

Let's read the story...



About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

Luke 2:1-7 *(The Message)*

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying...

"Don't be afraid. Take Mary as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins"

Matthew 1:20-21



## Closing Prayer

*Heavenly Father, we praise you. The Baby, Jesus, has been born to us. He is Your one and only Son, our Lord and Savior. He is the greatest gift of all. Thank you for sending Your gift to save us. Thank you for the gift of eternal life. We worship Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Record your own prayers.

## Family Activity

Suggestion: Set up your nativity scene and talk about the different people that came to see Jesus (60). More activities are listed 58-63.



# Daily Scripture Meditations

## **Monday:** Micah 5:2

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

It was prophesied that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem. What difference does this prophecy make?

How does Jesus rule today?

## **Tuesday:** Zechariah 9:9-10

*"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth."*

How has Jesus shown himself to be gentle in your life?

How has Jesus brought peace to your soul?

**Wednesday:** Jeremiah 23:5-6

*"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness."*

How has Jesus directed your path in the way of truth and righteousness?

What one area of your life have you seen Jesus change towards righteousness? Take time right now and thank Him for this gift.

**Thursday:** Isaiah 42:1-4

*"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."*

The good news of Jesus is spreading rapidly to all the world. How have you been faithful to proclaim the good news?

One of the stories told in the gospels is how the woman of ill repute came and anointed Jesus. How did He show kindness to this "bruised reed?" [See Luke 7:36-50.]

**Friday:** Isaiah 11:1-5

*"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD-- and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist."*

How did Jesus show that He delighted in the fear of the Lord?

When did you see the righteousness of Jesus in the gospels?

**Saturday**: Revelation 21:5

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"  
Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

Jesus is making all things new. How does that encourage you today?

Jesus promises to return as a conquering King who will one day make a new heavens and new earth. Write a few reasons why you look forward to this.

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you  
are small among the clans of Judah, out of you  
will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

The Prophet Micah (5:2) written 700 years before Jesus