

**Sun., Dec. 5** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, Holy Communion (Dan Hair)

Memory Verse: "Nothing is impossible for God." -Luke 1:37

Reading of Scripture: Luke 1:5-25

Message: "The Coming: Foretold!"

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Blurb: Luke begins his famous story of Jesus birth with another miracle birth: of John the Baptist.

This Sunday we'll be reading through Luke 1:5-38 and hear the gospel message erupting in the beginning of the Christmas story. Come ready to refocus your Christmas. (And that includes bringing your Bibles.)

Holy Communion: Rev. Dan Hair

**[Recorded Worship Beginning]**

**WELCOME** -Pastor Andrew

-People at home gather bread and juice for Holy Communion

**MEMORY VERSE:** -Pastor Andrew

"Nothing is impossible for God." -Luke 1:37

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Sanctify

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

*King of Glory*

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

**[Live Worship Beginning]**

**GATHERING SONG:** *Sing We the Song of Emmanuel* -Sanctify

**WELCOME** -Pastor David

Holy Communion - "Open Communion," and elements in individual containers

**MEMORY VERSE:** -Pastor David

"Nothing is impossible for God." -Luke 1:37

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Sanctify

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

*Another in the Fire*

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

**[Both Recorded & Live Worship]**

**ADVENT CANDLE / READING OF SCRIPTURE:** Luke 1:5-38 Michael Berglund Family

At the very beginning of Luke's Gospel, after greeting Theophilus, Luke begins the story of Jesus with the foretelling of John the Baptist. The story of Christmas begins with John. Luke 1:5-25,

“5 During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. 6 They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7 They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old. 8 One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. 9 Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. 10 All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. 11 An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

13 The angel said, “Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the Lord's eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. 16 He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. 17 He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? My wife & I are very old.”

19 The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. 20 Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn't believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen.”

21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered why he was in the sanctuary for such a long time. 22 When he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he gestured to them and couldn't speak. 23 When he completed the days of his priestly service, he returned home. 24 Afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She kept to herself for five months, saying, 25 “This is the Lord's doing. He has shown his favor to me by removing my disgrace among other people.”

**SERVE MOMENT:** Hope Moves -Marilee

**INTERGENERATIONAL BRIDGE:** Video -Pastor Andrew

**MESSAGE: The Coming: Foretold!**

**PP#1:** The Coming: Foretold!

38 Then Mary said, ‘I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.’ Then the angel left her.” -Luke 1:38

The Coming: Foretold! Luke 1:38, “Then Mary said, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.’ Then the angel left her.”

**PP#2:** *Images of the craziness of Christmas season and the craziness of our world right now*

We’re heading 90 miles an hour to Christmas, right? Feeling stressed yet? Now, we know that Christmas is about Jesus. But our attention is so focused on all the *activities* of the Christmas, that we struggle to focus on the *person* of Christmas. And that’s why we’re starting a year of focusing on the person of Jesus *right now*, during Christmas. Our lives are like this Christmas season: we’re so very focused on so many things, all the cares and worries of day-to-day living, that we struggle to keep our connection to Jesus. But we do know that it’s our connection to Jesus that helps us navigate well through the craziness of daily life. And, we commit to be Jesus-followers, disciples, and believe that He is our hope, joy and abundant life. Therefore, as we seek to live abundantly in our culture—our pond—of selfishness, negativity and friction, we need to double down on Jesus! So, we are committing to spending the next year with Jesus by reading through Luke together, so we can double down on being faithful disciples of Jesus and live abundantly.

**PP#3:** A Year with Luke: Reading through the Gospel of Luke in a year -  
To discover how to follow Jesus better!

We’re going to take a chunk of Luke’s Gospel each Sunday, and we’re going to ask the Holy Spirit to inspire our hearing and understanding of it along the way. We’re going to walk along side Luke as we follow Jesus. We’ll read slowly, unpacking it as we go, and each week we’ll draw life applications for living as His disciples. So, these are not going to be your typical sermons. We’re going to be digging into the word, and always asking what it means for how we live right now for Jesus.

We’re seeking Jesus...for this Christmas, for our lives, for our world. And so we come to hear the story of Jesus, and we begin with the story of Christmas, at Christmastime, which can be one of the hardest times to stay close to Jesus! So, we need this!

You might also want to bring your Bibles to worship, as we will be taking notes as we read. You can use the Bibles here, and we’ll have it on the screen, but you might prefer your own Bible.

**PP#4:** The Gospel of Luke:  
A letter from Luke  
To Theophilus  
Sharing a reliable account of Jesus’ life

So, Jesus. The story of Jesus is found right at the beginning of the New Testament. The New Testament starts about three-fourths the way through the Bible. There are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, so if you hit one of them, you’re close!

Turn to Luke, chapter 1. Now last week we discovered that this is actually a letter, from Luke to a certain Theophilus. Theophilus is like us, not having met Jesus but wanting a credible description of what all happened with Jesus. Luke wasn’t an apostle, but he faithfully researched the writings and interviewed those who walked with Jesus and compiled this reliable story of Jesus.

**PP#5: Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)**

5 During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. 6 They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7 They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old.

Turn to Luke 1:5. We heard this read earlier. Notice that Luke begins his story of Jesus *not* with Jesus' birth, but with the birth of a person named John. Right away we see that there is more going on here than a simple biography. Luke is writing a *spiritual* biography. If you have a place on your title page for Luke in your Bible, make a short list, six items, like this:

***[Write on chart: "Luke:]***

***Then below that, "Spiritual biography of Jesus"]***

He's sharing the parts of the story that reveal not just what Jesus did, but who He was and why He is so important. Luke is a physician, a man of science.

***[Researched]***

So, I'm going to be calling out when I see Luke sharing important details. Like right here off the bat, Luke sets up the story with its concrete historical setting: this is a story about a real person, held in real time, at a real place.

***[Historical]***

He sets the context historically, in a verifiable way. It actually happened. During the reign of Herod the Great, reigning in Judea.

So, there's another story about another miraculous birth that reveals insight into this Jesus. This story helps us understand the Jesus story better. The baby was John. He was special. He was given by God to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, who had been promised for centuries. John is a witness for the credibility that Jesus was legitimate, and legitimately from God.

In your Bible's margins, by John 1:5, write down, "John's birth shows Jesus is the Messiah."

Elizabeth and Zechariah, verses 6-7, typify God's people: trying to follow God, but barren: no hope of a future. [In your margins draw a line to their names and write, "Like us"] This is also our world, and this is you and me. They had prayed prayers asking if God had forgotten them, abandoned them. Do they matter? Where is God as they trudge through the sadness of life?

**PP#6: Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)**

8 One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. 9 Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. 10 All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. 11 An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

Now, Luke is a non-Jew, writing to a non-Jew, so he helpfully explains how some of the Jewish stuff works: like priests serving in the temple (verses 9-10).

***[To your list, add: "Explains Jewish stuff"]***

And notice, that the story of salvation begins in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus, if you think about Him, is not really connected much to the Temple. It might be tempting to say that although the Temple had been the physical location of God's presence in this world throughout the Old

Testament, now God had walked away from all that. But no, the story of salvation through Jesus again starts at the Temple. You see, it starts there, but it is not contained there. Salvation is not just for the Jews.

**[To your list, add: “Salvation also for non-Jews”]**

It is also for the non-Jews, like Luke, like Theophilus, like you and me. But it is still *consistent* with all the work God had been doing in the world up until then. It starts in the Temple, and Luke, in the rest of his Gospel, shows how it overflows to the rest of the world.

Suddenly an angel appears to Zechariah in the temple. Notice Luke’s eye for detail, that the angel appeared on *the right side* of the incense altar. See? Luke’s done his research thoroughly! And Luke notices the irony of how a God-fearing and faithful priest, serving in the Temple, and while praying, is shocked to see God’s angel, and finds it even harder to believe that God could work a miracle in his life. Again, this is us: trying hard to serve God, but also finding it hard to see God’s miracles right in front of us.

**PP#7: Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)**

13 The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the Lord’s eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. 16 He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. 17 He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

The angel speaks, and here’s the summery of the whole story of salvation: “Don’t be afraid. God has heard your prayers, and now God is coming to help.” That is the good news! Make sure you hear this! This is the story of Jesus! “Don’t be afraid. God has heard you. God is coming to help.”

And Zechariah and Anna find that their individual miracle is also part of God’s bigger miracle. Write down, by verse 13: “God works us into His bigger plan.” God works, weaving the blessings He showers on each of us His people, as part of the bigger work that God is up to in the world. This is how our God works. He’s not some vending machine God who just pops out individual blessings for us. He is doing something much bigger, and our lives are woven into that. So, whenever you see God’s blessings in your life, remember to look for the bigger picture.

Now, Anna and Zechariah: Luke says they were “very old” (in that culture, maybe in their 60s?), and they may have wondered, “It seems a little late!” So, why is God doing this? Again, God was up to something. And their son’s name, John, means “The Lord is Gracious.” And there the angel introduces the key theme all through this Christmas story. “He will be *a joy* to you.” “Many people will *rejoice*.” Underline “joy” and “rejoice.” We’ll keep doing that as we keep reading.

This John will have a special calling. He’ll be filled with the Holy Spirit from before his birth. Next Sunday we’ll hear how this was true. Before, in the Old Testament, God’s Spirit came on people for special times and for special purposes. But now the Holy Spirit would rest on him his entire life. So, he was to keep the special Nazarite vows, described back in Numbers 6.

**PP#8: Foretold:**

1. God is Coming
2. Joy is breaking out
3. The Holy Spirit is the main Actor

1. God is coming. 2. Joy is breaking out. 3. And the Holy Spirit is the main actor. Notice this! In the story of salvation, with the coming of the Messiah, the Holy Spirit starts doing all kinds of amazing things.

Next to verse 17, write “Malachi 4:5-6.” The prophet Malachi had foretold that Elijah would precede the coming of the Lord’s Messiah. John comes in that role. Isaiah 40:3-5 said He would “be a voice calling out in the wilderness.” All of this came true in John. His key role will be to go before the Lord Himself. Below your note “Malachi 4:5-6,” write “John announces the Messiah.”

**PP#9:** Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)

18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old.”

19 The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in God’s presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. 20 Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn’t believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen.”

Luke is saying that if you want to know who the Messiah is, watch John. John announces the coming of the Lord. God is coming. Joy is breaking out. The Holy Spirit is acting. The impossible is happening. John calls out. But, Luke 1:18, the voice of disbelief—Zechariah, who tells an angel it cannot happen—goes quiet, verse 20.

**PP#10:** Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)

21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered why he was in the sanctuary for such a long time. 22 When he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he gestured to them and couldn’t speak. 23 When he completed the days of his priestly service, he returned home. 24 Afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She kept to herself for five months, saying, 25 “This is the Lord’s doing. He has shown His favor to me by removing my disgrace among other people.”

Zechariah could not speak doubt, but God still used him as a testimony to others. And his wife, again keeping to herself, testifies that “This is the Lord’s doing. He has shown favor.” Again, this is the gospel in a nutshell!

**PP#11:** Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)

26 When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, 27 to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David’s house. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 When the angel came to her, he said, “Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!” 29 She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

So notice, it is into this birth story of John that Luke embeds the birth story of Jesus. “Don’t be afraid. God has heard your prayers, and now God is coming. God will help.” Miraculous birth. Joy spreading. The Holy Spirit is on the loose. “This is the Lord’s doing. He has shown favor.”

The angel Gabriel appears to another woman unable to bear children. This time it’s a young virgin. Let’s start reading in verse 26. “When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, 27 to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David’s house. The virgin’s name was Mary.”

The story of salvation started with priests in the Temple in Jerusalem, but now the story moves to ordinary people in a distant village to the north. See how the story of salvation is spreading? It's for ordinary folk!

Yet God has not forgotten that both Mary and Joseph are distant descendants of King David.

**[To your list, add: "Biology"]**

Luke picks up on the faithfulness to the *biology* here: Jesus' ancestry verifies how He again fulfills the prophecies of the Messiah.

Verse 28, "When the angel came to her, he said, 'Rejoice, favored one! [Underline "rejoice."] The Lord is with you!' [Again, this is the gospel message! But humble Mary, verse 29] She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be." Us! Right?

**PP#12: Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)**

30 The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. 31 Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father. 33 He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to His kingdom."

Verse 30, "The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. [Again the gospel: Don't be afraid, God is honoring you! And now the bigger plan:] 31 Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus." The name Jesus means "The Lord Saves." This is what God is doing! God is fulfilling His promise to save His people. Mary will bear *the Savior*! Wow! And the name "Jesus," this is the same name as "Joshua" in the Old Testament. By verse 31 write, "Jesus = Joshua = 'The Lord Saves.'" Joshua led the people out of the wilderness and into the promised land. This is what Jesus will do, spiritually: lead God's people out of the wilderness of sin and into the promised land of salvation. Joshua is a Hebrew name. Jesus is the Greek form of the name. What? A Greek name? A Hebrew savior with a Greek name? He's also the Savior for the non-Jews! Good news for Luke, and Theophilus, and us!

Verse "32 He will be great and He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father. 33 He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to His kingdom." The Messiah will be the long-expected King reigning on David's throne, ruling forever. We learned all about this this fall: King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. This is the promised Messiah, for sure! By verse 33, write, "King of Kings" and "Revelation 19:16."

**PP#13: Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)**

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

35 The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. 36 Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant."

Now, unlike Zechariah who *couldn't* see how God could act, Mary asks about being faithful to her marriage covenant and if she is supposed to stay faithful to Joseph, her fiancé. I'm sure Luke, as a physician, was also very interested in this particular *biological* question! Verse 34, "Then Mary said to the angel, 'How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?'"

[Point to: *Biology*] Doctor Luke!

“35 The angel replied, ‘The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God’s Son.’” The Messiah will be God’s own son. He’ll be fully human—Mary’s son—and fully divine—God’s son. By verse 35, write “Jesus - fully human and divine.”

Then the angel points to Elizabeth for Mary to see how God is already doing the impossible. Verse “36 ‘Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled ‘unable to conceive’ is now six months pregnant.’” Biology verifies the miracle!

**PP#14:** Luke 1:5-38 (CEB)

36 Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled ‘unable to conceive’ is now six months pregnant. 37 Nothing is impossible for God.”

38 Then Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

And then the angel makes that awesome statement, that we have to hold on to, and cling to: Verse 37, “Nothing is impossible for God.” Isn’t that amazing? That’s also the Gospel message! It’s our memory verse for this week. Say it with me again, “Nothing is impossible for God.”

Now, how different is Mary from Zechariah. He’s a long-time child of God, a priest, leading prayers while at the Temple in Jerusalem. He worries this is all impossible. But young Mary, ordinary maiden out in the unimportant periphery, this is how she responds. Verse 38, “Then Mary said, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.’ Then the angel left her.”

**PP#15:** Foretold:

1. God is Coming
2. Joy is breaking out
3. The Holy Spirit is the main Actor
4. Salvation has begun!

So, are you still with me? That’s a lot of diving deep into these verses words, line by line. We’re going to be doing this each Sunday, so bring your Bibles and pencils. But,

**[Point to flip chart]**

are you starting to see how Luke’s perspective shapes what we hear of the salvation story? Pretty cool, huh?

And right away at the beginning, with these announcements stories—historically they’re called “the annunciations”—we see: God is coming, joy is breaking out, the Holy Spirit is the main actor, and that salvation has begun! This is the setting for some really cool stuff. I almost hate to stop here for today, right?

**PP#16:** The Gospel Message in Luke 1:

“Don’t be afraid. God has heard you.” God is coming to help. 1:13

“This is the Lord’s doing. He has shown favor.” 1:25

“Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!” 1:28

“Don’t be afraid. God is honoring you.” 1:30

“Nothing is impossible for God.” 1:37



But, we have to go to our applications now. Just a couple here, briefly. First of all, as we get into the Christmas story, hear the gospel message. It's proclaimed all over the place! And so, as we zoom and careen toward Christmas, be sure to hear the gospel message erupting here!

Luke 1:13, "Don't be afraid. God has heard you." God is coming to help.

1:25 "This is the Lord's doing. He has shown favor."

1:28 "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!"

1:30 "Don't be afraid. God is honoring you."

1:37 "Nothing is impossible for God."

We need to hear this! This is where our joy comes from. This is why we are choosing to follow Jesus, while trudging through our lives in an uphill trek through a swirling world filled with woes. Right now, as you take your next step, hear the gospel...it's for you! "The Lord is with you!" As you begin to sink in all the *activities* of Christmas, focus on the *person* of Christmas! "Nothing is impossible for God!"

**PP#17:** Foretold: The Savior comes to you!

Tell back: "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." (Luke 1:38)

So, we overhear the foretelling of the coming of the promised Messiah, the Savior. We see God's Holy Spirit working all things together. We open our hearts to the gospel. And we focus on the person of the Gospel, Jesus.

And perhaps most importantly, we see from these stories, how we are to be a bit less like faithful—but doubting!—Zechariah, and a bit more like faithful—but open—Mary. When we hear the telling of the Christmas story, we make Mary's response our response, and tell back: "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." We choose to follow this Jesus, come what may. We will go where He takes us. We will live His way. We choose God's way as our way. Are you with me? This is what Christmas is all about! We take God's way as our way. If you're brave enough, like Mary, then say it with me: "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said."

Merry Christmas!

Amen!

**HOLY COMMUNION / PRAYERS:** -Pastor Dan Hair

**CLOSING SONG:** *King of Glory* -Sanctify

**OFFERING:** -Pastor David

-Give of your monies to God's work through this church. You can give in person, mail it in, drop it off or, most conveniently, you can make an electronic transfer or a debit card payment on the church website or by using the "square" on the bulletin.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** -Pastor David

Wednesday night: Meal and Groups, including Hope Moves!

Next Sunday's message: Third Sunday of Advent: The birth of John the Baptist

Read ahead the rest of Luke 1, verses 39-80

Next Sunday: Hope Moves Christmas Party for Women of Adult-Teen Challenge

**MEMORY VERSE** -Pastor David

“Nothing is impossible for God.” -Luke 1:37

**BENEDICTION** -Pastor David