

Light the Candle.

Bless.

Gracious God, bless this food, the gifts of your creation, and all the hands that played a part in bringing it to this table.

Bless this table, around which we gather, and bless all those we wish were with us today.

Help us to listen to your word and to each other so that we might hear the Good News in this story. AMEN.

Read. *Readers in the household take turns reading the paragraphs.*

December 20-26

Luke 1:26-38 | Advent IV

Let us hear the Good News of God:

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his

ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God!

Question. *Use some or all of these questions as you wish. If you have younger children in your household, you might invite them to make up their own question to ask!*

- Are there any **words you really like** in this story? Are there any **words you don't understand**?
- Have you ever **been in a situation** like this one before?
- Are there any **people** that remind you of this story?
- What is the **Good News** in this story?
- What **do you need to learn** from this story?
- Now that you've heard this story, what might God need you **to do**?

Bless.

Gracious God, we thank you for all we have been given, the blessings of this table, and the blessings of our daily lives.

Thank you for all we have heard, your voice in both scripture and in the words of those we love.

We pray for the courage to speak the Good News in the world around us
either by word or action, that we may play our part in the sacred story.
AMEN.