

## PREPARING AT HOME

January 7-13, 2019

*Focus reading:* Luke 3:15–17, 21–22 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=412063460>)

*Other lectionary readings:* Isaiah 43:1–7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14–17

*Theme:* Remembering God's Promises

Advent is the season of anticipation. It is a time spent actively waiting for Jesus to come. But now the presents are unwrapped and the decorations are being stored until next year. Jesus was born; angels sang; even the wise men have ended their long journey to find Jesus. For us, anticipation has ended. Yet, Jesus' birth in Bethlehem did not end the anticipation of those who were living at the time of his birth. The people were still waiting for the one God had promised, the Messiah, as told in the Hebrew Scriptures. The anticipated Messiah would usher in God's reign of justice and love, and it couldn't come soon enough! Some wondered if John the Baptist might be the Messiah, but he assured the people that he was not. The Messiah, someone far greater than John, was coming. John was not worthy to help him out of his sandals so that he could step into the water to be baptized, let alone worthy enough to baptize him. Luke does not even mention John's part in baptizing Jesus, but rather skips to God's role in the baptism. God's Spirit descends like a dove and announces that Jesus is God's beloved Son. In that scene, the people catch a glimpse of what they have been anticipating, God's promise fulfilled. In our baptism we, too, see the fulfillment of that promise. We are joined with Christ, adopted as his brothers and sisters. We, too, are God's beloved, bearing witness to God's reign of justice and love!

### JESUS' BAPTISM AND MINE

If your child has been baptized, share stories and photos of that event. Especially for children who were baptized as infants, it is important that we make real to them an important event that they cannot remember. If your child is not baptized, talk about how and when that might happen. In the Presbyterian Church, we practice infant baptism, believing that God loves us before we are born. However, we honor the parents' choice whether to have their children baptized as infants or at a later time.

### YOU ARE GOD'S BELOVED

Put some water in a bowl. Touch your child's head with water, and say, "You are God's beloved." Talk about the following: What does it mean to you to be God's beloved? How are you bringing God's love to others?

### PRAYER

Gracious God,  
We give thanks  
that we are your beloved children.  
Help us to bring that love  
into the lives of others.  
Amen.

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