

*Nurturing Faith...  
Every Day in Every Way*



December 23, 2018

Micah 5:2-5a  
Luke 1:46b-55  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

*Mary Visits Elizabeth*



Today is the last Sunday before Christmas. Are you getting excited? I am! What are some of the things that you look forward to at Christmas — besides opening presents of course? What are some of the family traditions your family has? (Give the children time to share.) The thing I remember most about the Christmases of my childhood is our family get-together. We almost always went to my Grandmother's house and had a big family get-together. It was often the only time during the year when I got to see some of my aunts, uncles, and cousins. We had so much fun visiting, eating, and playing games. In my mind, one of the very best things about Christmas is celebrating the birth of Jesus with family.

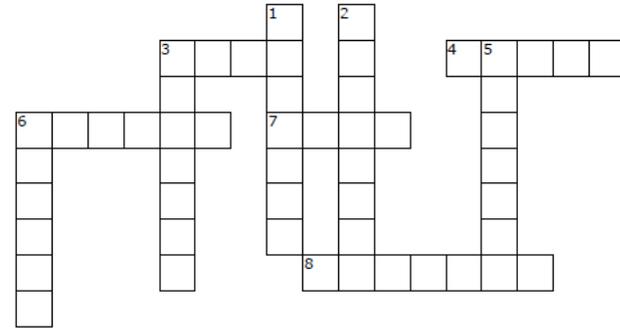
Our Gospel reading today tells what happened after God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary that she was going to have a baby and that she would name him Jesus. Can you imagine how Mary, a teenager engaged to marry a young carpenter, must have felt to hear news like that? After she recovered from the shock, the Bible tells us that Mary hurried to the home of a relative, Elizabeth, to tell her the news. Elizabeth was also expecting a baby, (John the Baptist) and the Bible tells us that when she heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and said to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed." That is amazing! Before Mary even said a word about having a child, Elizabeth knew it and she knew that the child was going to be a very special child! "Why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord would visit me?" Elizabeth said. "You are a blessed woman because you have believed that the Lord would do what he said."

So, at the very beginning of the Christmas story was an event that was shared with family and it is a time that has meaning to us as families today. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it is certainly appropriate that we celebrate it with our families just as Mary did with Elizabeth.

Loving God, we are thankful for this time of joyful celebration of our Savior's birth. Help us to honor his birthday as a time of celebration with our families and friends. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

*Crossword Puzzle*



ACROSS

- 3. The spiritual part of humans which lives forever
- 4. To be filled excessive self-esteem
- 6. To feel the need or desire for food
- 7. Having great wealth
- 8. Having good things given to you, especially from God

DOWN

- 1. To give honor, praise, and adoration to
- 2. To show mercy or compassion to another
- 3. One who yields or surrenders to the will or authority of another
- 5. To express great joy or happiness
- 6. Not proud or boastful

soul	rejoice	blessed	hungry	servant
glorify	humble	proud	rich	merciful

**Activity:** Trace and cut out angels then color and decorate them. You could hang the angels on your Christmas tree, or give them away as a gift.

**Discussion Question:** What's your favorite part of Christmas? What are some traditions that you keep with your family?

**Family Table Prayer for December:** Round this table, here to pray. First we thank you for the day. For our family and our friends, gifts of grace that heaven lends. Living water, daily bread, countless blessings our God sends. Thank you, Jesus, for them all, for the great ones and the small. Amen.

**December Memory Verse:** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11



Let's sing about Jesus' birth!