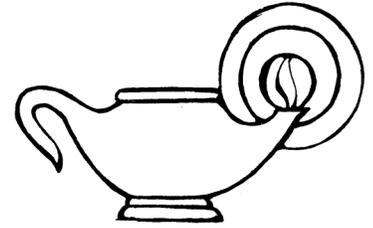


Opening Prayer: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen. The Book of Common Prayer, Proper 28, page 236. Alternative prayer: Fourth Sunday of Advent, page 160 or 212.*



Review of Last Week’s Lesson: Last week’s lesson described the arrival of the Messiah. Isaiah told us the Messiah would heal the infirm and restore the land. Psalm 146 is a psalm of praise for what God has done and will do for us. In James 5, the emphasis was on being patient as we await the return of the Lord. In Matthew 11, John the Baptist, who was in prison, sent his disciples to ask if Jesus really was the “one to come.” Jesus sent word to John assuring him that he is the Messiah.

**Year A, Lesson 4
The Fourth
Sunday of Advent**

In last week’s application, there were a number of questions designed to allow you to think about the days leading up to Christmas and ways to make Christmas more meaningful in your life and in the life of others. In what way are you planning to give the gift of your time and love this Christmas?

TODAY’S

SCRIPTURES:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

Romans 1:1-7

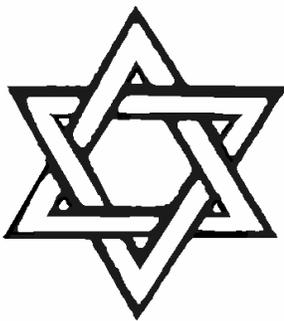
Matthew 1:18-25

THEME:

Christ is our Lord.

MEMORY VERSE:

Romans 1:3-4



Background Notes: Isaiah 7:10-16 ✨ This passage deals with the problem of maintaining faith. God offered Ahaz, the King of Judah, a sign that would confirm his faith. Ahaz attempted to disguise his lack of faith by piously turning down this offer. Whether Ahaz chose to believe or not, Isaiah promised a sign that a young virgin would have a son who would be called Immanuel. Immanuel means “God is with us.”

Questions:

1. Describe God’s offer to Ahaz. (Isa. 7:10-11) _____

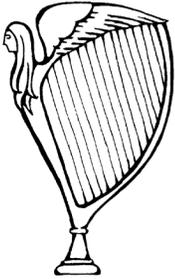
2. What was Ahaz’s answer to the Lord through Isaiah? (Isa. 7:12) _____

3. What was Isaiah’s reaction when Ahaz refused a sign from God? (Isa. 7:13)

4. What promise do you find in verses 14 through 15? _____

5. What was to be the consequence of Ahaz failing to declare his faith in God? (Isa. 7:16) _____

6. **Challenge Question:** Explain how these verses could apply to you (personal answer) and how they could apply to Jesus. _____



Background Notes: Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 ❖ This psalm is a prayer to the Shepherd of Israel. In verse 2 there is a reference to the tribes directly north of Judah: Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Numbers 2 lists these same three tribes, referring to when God told Moses and Aaron to camp around the Tent of Meeting, each man under his standard with the banners of his family. (Nu. 2:1-2, 18-22)

Questions:

1. What did the psalmist ask God, the shepherd of Israel, to do? (Ps. 80:1-3, 7, 14, 18-19) _____
2. What did the people experience that made them realize they were in disfavor with God? (Ps. 80:4-6) _____
3. Who was at the right hand of God? (Ps. 80:17, 110:1; Mt. 22:44) _____
4. Who sits at the right hand of God now, and what role does he play in your life? _____



Background Notes: Romans 1:1-7 ❖ Paul began his letter to the Christians in Rome by establishing his credentials as an apostle. He declared that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and he assured the Romans that those who had faith belonged to Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. For what purpose did Paul say that he was “set apart”? (Ro. 1:1) _____
2. Who told the world that the Messiah would come? (Ro. 1:2) _____

3. What does the expression, “according to the flesh” mean? (Some translations say, “as to his human nature”.) (Ro.1:3) _____

4. What did the resurrection of Jesus signify? (Ro. 1:4) _____

5. What benefits and responsibilities do believers receive through faith in Jesus Christ? (Ro. 1:5-6) _____

6. To whom did Paul address this letter? (Ro. 1:7) _____

7. What was his salutation? (Ro. 1:7) _____

8. Summarize what these verses say to emphasize the deity of Jesus Christ. _____



Background Notes: Matthew 1:18-25 ✠ Matthew described how Joseph dealt with the news that the woman to whom he was betrothed was pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

1. What was Joseph’s first reaction regarding Mary’s condition when he found out she was “with child through the Holy Spirit”? (Mt. 1:18-19) _____

2. Who advised Joseph regarding whether or not he should marry Mary? (Mt. 1:20) _____
3. What did the angel of the Lord encourage Joseph to do regarding his decision to not follow through on his plan concerning Mary? (Mt. 1:20-21) _____

4. Which verse, from this week’s reading in Isaiah, did the angel quote? (Mt. 1:22-23) _____

5. What does the name “Jesus” mean? (Mt. 1:21) _____

6. What does the name “Emmanuel” mean? (Mt. 1:23; Isa. 7:14) _____

7. When Joseph awoke from his dream, what did he do to comply with the angel’s command? (Mt. 1:24-25)

8. What do you think Joseph must have felt when he discovered Mary was pregnant? _____

9. What do you think Mary felt about her situation? _____

10. What do you think about Joseph’s behavior toward his fiancée? _____

11. What was your reaction when you thought someone you loved let you down? (personal answer) _____

12. In what way did you deal with this disappointment? (personal answer) _____

13. What do Joseph’s actions teach us about choices? _____

14. What lessons do you learn from this Scripture? _____

Closing Prayer: Lord God, we thank you for sending the Messiah, Jesus Christ, into the world. We thank you for the record we have of his birth, life, death and resurrection. Help us to keep the true meaning of Christmas in mind as we celebrate Christ’s birth. We pray that our celebration of Christmas will be a witness to those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. We pray especially for those who seek Christ, that they will find Christ and become members of your heavenly family. *Amen.*

Application for Next Week: Very soon we will celebrate Christmas. We learn from the media, advertisers and our traditions that Christmas should be celebrated with family and/or close friends. Do you think Mary, Joseph and Jesus started this tradition? They were travelers without a place to spend the night and probably quite hungry. They certainly did not have a smooth, secure, traditional beginning to their family life. Perhaps you can re-evaluate how you will celebrate this Christmas. Would it be possible to invite someone to join your family gathering, to share a meal with you or to attend Christmas services with you? Are you able to provide food so that a family without enough money can have Christmas dinner together? Can you afford to donate to groups who support the homeless? Think of how you can apply the experience of the Holy Family to your plans for celebrating Christmas this year.