



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

**December 14-20, 2020**

**Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Sermon Title: “Why We Yet Have Hope”**

Notes from sermon on 12/13:

Things For Which to Pray This Week:

### **Family Focus Question:**

What is the difference between David’s understanding of “house” and God’s vision of “house”?  
What does that tell us about our vision versus God’s?

### **Questions for Small Groups**

1. What do you hope for most? What do you think God “hopes” for you most?
2. How would you have reacted if the angel appeared to you like Mary with such words of promise and hope?
3. Was Gabriel right when he said, “For nothing is impossible with God”?  
Would you put any disclaimers on that sentence?

### **Monday, December 14: Read Luke 1:26-31**

As we enter the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, the gospel readings become increasingly familiar. “We know this story,” we think to ourselves, so we read through them quickly. Two thousand years later, it’s easy to see the hope and promise in all of the stories, and we know the happy ending that’s coming. If only we could have the same perspective on our circumstances this year.

Today, we purposely stop halfway through the story of Gabriel’s visit to Mary. We stop at the point where a terrifying, strange angel tells a young, unmarried virgin that she’s going to become pregnant, with no other details or explanation other than the instructions, “Name him Jesus.” What must Mary have been feeling at this point? What fear of humiliation, rejection, pain, and even physical danger must have been going through her mind? At this point, Mary doesn’t yet know the “how” and the “why” of it all, nor does she know the great plans God has in store for her child. She does know one thing, though – Jesus’ given name means “God saves” or “God delivers”. Like Mary, we do not yet know all the specifics of how or why or when, but we do know that hope and deliverance is found in this child. What more do we need?

**Tuesday, December 15: Read Luke 1:32-38**

Even as we finish reading the story of Gabriel's visit to Mary today, we realize how easy it would be to misinterpret Gabriel's description of God's plans for Jesus and how Mary's unborn son will change the world. Years will pass before Mary will be able to grasp the magnitude of who her son truly is, and during her lifetime she certainly could not have envisioned the historical, global, and cosmic impact to her answer, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." What if we approached every calling from God with the hope and assurance that God could do incredible, history-changing things with our obedience, even if we never fully see the impact when on earth? How much more hope could we have in our circumstances today if we fully appreciated God's power to grow and harvest the seeds God is planting everywhere around us? Let us make a commitment for the rest of Advent and beyond to find that glimmer of excitement and hope every time we feel God calling us to do something, no matter how great or how small; no matter how vague the "how" or "why". Who knows what it could turn into?

**Wednesday, December 16: Read Luke 1:46b-55**

We now come to one of the most exquisite examples of obedience and worship in the entire Bible – Mary's Magnificat. Notice the timing of Mary's song: None of Gabriel's promises have yet to materialize. So where does she get her hope? How can she be so sure this surprise and unasked-for unwed pregnancy is such a blessing? By turning to the past and recognizing what God has already done. In the face of our own uncertainty and fear of the future, we can look back to every time God came through for us – all the instances we now know were not as hopeless as they seemed. Today, let us take time to remember every seemingly disastrous situation that has now turned into a hilarious family story, every broken heart that we now know was a dodged bullet, and every closed door that resulted in an open gate to something so much more wonderful. What difficult situation facing you today can you hand over to God in hope of an incredible, happy ending?

**Thursday, December 17: Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

Throughout the Bible and our own lives, we can see that God almost always works through people to bring about God's kingdom. In today's passage, God begins to give instructions to Samuel and David about building God's "house." The promises that come from God to David regarding the longevity and power of the "house of David" is impressive even in this passage. Two thousand years later, we recognize the "house" in the person of Jesus. God is calling all of us to build God's house and kingdom on earth. We will probably never know the full extent to what we are building, or what God will fully reveal while we are still on earth. But what incredible hope we can live in when we recognize that every obedient "yes," like Samuel, David, and Mary, can be leading to unimagined healing, love, joy, and peace for the world?

**Friday, December 18: Read Romans 16:25-27**

We can use today's words from Paul to the church in Rome as a benediction and blessing to give us power and hope in a time of uncertainty, but expectation. We have seen the fulfillment of the words of the prophets in the person of Jesus Christ. We know we can look forward to the fulfillment of the words of Christ. Everything God has done for us has strengthened us right now. Everything God is doing for us right now will be revealed in due time. We can partner with God in this hope, just as Mary partnered with God so many years ago. Together, we can bring hope and light to the world where it's needed most.

**Saturday, December 19: Scripture Memorization: 2 Samuel 7:16**

"Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me;  
your throne shall be established forever."

**Sunday, December 20: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Lord, we confess that it is often easier quietly to resign our dreams than it is to maintain hope. In so doing, we cast our gaze upon our struggles instead of your promises. Raise our souls and our prayers once again, that we might place our hope in you and your plans. Draw us once again into the precious place of hope that you showed your servants David and Mary so long ago. In Jesus' name, AMEN*