

# FAITH @ HOME

Week of December 27, 2020

First Sunday after Christmas

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Luke 2:22-40

**REFLECT:** Many people were waiting for the arrival of the Son of God, but they were expecting a king. Simeon was an old man who spent a great deal of time at the Temple. People would come and go through the Temple and watched each person as they came in. Simeon was looking for something specific. Do you remember what he was looking for?

Simeon was looking for the Lord's Messiah. One day, Simeon reached out and held baby Jesus and knew immediately that Jesus was the Son of God. I wonder how he knew?

**RESPOND:** Make a puzzle: Draw a picture of Baby Jesus on a sturdy piece of cardstock or cardboard. Maybe with an adult's help, cut the picture up in pieces. Invite a parent or friend to help you put together the puzzle. Once the pieces are back together, you will see Jesus – just like Simeon saw Jesus.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ROGER HUTCHISON



Roger Hutchison is the Director of Christian Formation and Parish Life at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston. An artist who paints with children and adults in a variety of contexts, he is the author of several books including *Jesus: God Among Us*, *The Painting Table*, and *The Very Best Day*. Roger serves as the chair of the Forma Council and is a member of the National Association of Grieving Children and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. He lives with his family outside of Houston, Texas.

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

**REFLECT:** On this first Sunday after Christmas everything is different for the people of God. They may not all realize it yet, but the world has changed. The old way of doing things has been cast away, because love has come into the world.

Faith has come into the world as a child, a baby. We have become like that baby-- children of God. Through Jesus we now know how much God loves us. The promise God makes to us in Jesus is that guiding us wasn't enough, helping us wasn't enough, protecting us wasn't enough. God wanted us to know that we are loved.

**RESPOND:** Make a list of the rules that you follow at your house. Why do you think these rules are important? What happens if you break the rules? Write down the consequences for breaking the rules (if there are any). If you break the rules are you still loved? Is there any rule on the list that would mean you wouldn't be loved if it was broken? That's what God's love for us is like.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: LISA PUCCIO



Lisa is the Coordinator for Special Needs Worship and Family Formation at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. Lisa leads Rhythms of Grace Houston, a weekly worship service for special needs families, and oversees ministries for children and parents at St. Andrew's. She has worked in parish ministry since 2002, served two terms as vice president of Forma, and is a member of the diocesan formation advisory committee in the Diocese of Texas. Lisa and her husband Mike have four grown children.

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** John 1:1-18

**REFLECT:** The first “real” full-time job I held (the summer after I graduated from high school) was as a tour guide at some caverns near my home. A big part of my job was taking groups of people on tours through the caverns, pointing out the different formations and talking about them. Early in the morning, before tours began, one guide would go into the caverns alone and turn on the lights for the day. I always disliked this part of the job, because at some point you would find yourself in total darkness. If you’ve ever experienced total darkness in a cave, you probably know that you can’t see anything—not even your hand in front of your face! It’s scary and uncertain, even with a powerful flashlight in hand.

This week we are in the season after Christmas: twelve days when we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the light of the world! Maybe this year has felt like total darkness in a cave to you. The uncertainty of everything is scary and we don’t know what will happen next. However, Jesus came to bring us hope, peace, love, and joy. The light of the world shines brightly now, and we are reminded that we are never alone.

**RESPOND:** If you are able, go on a night walk or hike. (Bundle up if it’s cold!) Take a flashlight if you need it, and if you can, look up at the stars in the sky. As you walk or hike, think about the places in your life this year where Jesus shined brightly during scary or uncertain times. Give thanks for the gift we celebrate this season—the light of the world!

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: VICTORIA HOPPES



Victoria Hoppes is the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. She also serves as the Project Manager for Faith @ Home. She has ministry experience with youth, family, and camping programs at both the parish and diocesan levels. She holds degrees from Texas Lutheran University and Luther Seminary. She also holds a certificate in Youth and Family Ministry from Forma’s certificate program. You can follow Victoria on her website, [www.ministryincontext.com](http://www.ministryincontext.com), or on social media (@vlhoppes).

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** John 1:1-18

**REFLECT:** Glory to God in the highest! The words of Isaiah have finally delivered us the promised Immanuel. Rejoice and be hopeful, for this little baby has come to be the light of our world. This light has come to shine in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it, will not overcome it. How many times did you pray this year for the darkness of COVID-19 to end? How many times did you wonder if your prayer was being heard? Well, it was. How do I know? Because in the birth of this holy child of God, Jesus Christ, we have been invited to become children of God, and heirs of this divine light that cannot be overcome, and ever since the pandemic started the light of God has not stopped shining and spreading through God's children. I know that every time you and I prayed for this pandemic to be gone, it was the Spirit inspiring us to pray for it to stop, for strength for health care providers, for consolation for those who lost a beloved family member or friend. This prayer has changed us and moved us into action, and your action may very well be the response of God to someone else's prayer.

**RESPOND:** In this first Sunday of Christmas, take the time to look back into the darkness of the year 2020, and ask yourself one question: how did God shine the light I needed when I was experiencing the deepest darkness? Where did I look to see God's light? Journal or write about this. Now, I invite you to look into a place of light in your heart, a memory of this year that helped you to feel hopeful. Write down this memory. Ask God to help you continue spreading this light, and to be God's light around those who you love the most.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: YURI RODRIGUEZ



Yuri Rodriguez is a seminarian at Sewanee, the University of the South. She is from the Diocese of Indianapolis. Yuri is also an artist, singer, and educator who specializes in Latin American Music and Culture.

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