



Monday, December 24, 2012

**READ-** *The Old Testament: | Samuel 2:18-20, 26*

The boy Samuel was dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve the priest Eli. Hannah had been barren for many years, prayed for a child and promised that child to serve God – a promise she kept. Samuel grew up to be one of the great prophets and priests, creator and advisor of kings.

**REFLECT-**

- Verse 26 of this passage is remarkably similar to verse 52 in our gospel passage, comparing Samuel and Jesus in their boyhood. God had a special plan for their lives and provided them the nurture they needed to live into that plan. God has a special plan for your life as well; no matter your age, there is still something you can do to be of service to God. Look for it!

**PRAY-**

Lord, help me to know your will for my life and to do it. Amen.

Tuesday, December 25, 2012

**READ-** *The Epistle: Colossians 3:12-17*

What wonderful lection for Christmas Day! This beautiful passage exemplifies all that Christ came to teach us – love of God through worship and praise, and love of each other through compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, gratitude, and forgiveness. Thanks be to God for sending his Son!

**REFLECT-**

- Today is a day in which we can express gratitude – to God for the gift of his Son, for our salvation through Jesus, for family and friends, for food and clothing and shelter. Let gratitude surround everything you do and say today as we celebrate God's great love for us and all creation!

**PRAY-**

O God, I give you thanks and praise for the many blessings of life, especially on this day as we remember the birth of your Son. Amen.

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

**READ-** *The Gospel: Luke 2:41-52*

Mary and Joseph were devout Jews who traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival each year. They traveled in a large group, possibly extended family members, so they did not immediately notice that Jesus was not with them – by this time he probably had several other younger siblings. He stayed behind at the temple, listening to the rabbis and sharing his already remarkable knowledge of the scriptures.

**REFLECT-**

- Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to God's service because of her promise to do so. Mary knew her son was special because of the angel's visit and his miraculous birth, but she did not know the extent of sacrifice that would be required of him and of her as his mother. What may you need to sacrifice to answer God's call on your life?

**PRAY-**

Lord, you want all of us – mind, body, spirit, and resources. Show me today what I can offer as a gift of love from what I have been given. Amen.

Thursday, December 27, 2012

**READ-** *The Psalter: Psalm 148*

Considered one of the "Hallelujah" psalms because it begins and ends with the Hebrew word which means "Praise the Lord!", this psalm invokes all of creation to offer praise to God for his mighty works - not just human beings, but the angels and all living things God created.

**REFLECT-**

- Read the psalm aloud, using your imagination to bring to mind the images described in each verse. Focus on praising God for all the many ways in which he has blessed you today. Hallelujah!

**PRAY-**

Lord, I offer you my praise and thanksgiving together with all your glorious creation. Amen.

Friday, December 28, 2012

**ACT-**

**Focus Verse: Colossians 3:12-17**

**Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, you also must forgive.**

In this season of Christmas and as a new year begins, forgiveness is the greatest gift you can give, both to the person who is forgiven and to yourself. Anger and bitterness can eat you up on the inside, robbing you of your joy. Who do you need to forgive today? Ask for God's help, and then take that first step to offer that great gift in gratitude for God's mercy.