

Sunday December 20, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 and Luke 1:26-38
“Waiting on the Threshold”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants share where they have encountered God this Advent season.

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Context: This week’s reading is arguably the high point of the story of David. He had bested King Saul, who was eventually killed in battle. He had made his peace with the other tribal elders who subsequently acclaimed him king. He had established his capital in a “neutral” city, Jerusalem, that had not been under the control of any of the Israelite tribes up to that point. He had built himself a royal palace. He had brought the ark of the covenant, that had accompanied the people throughout their journeys, to Jerusalem. But there was one more thing on the checklist of things kings do: build a temple (house) for his god. It seemed like a good idea; but the narrative makes it clear that instead God has chosen to build a house (family) for David, which would be the symbol and the agent of God’s covenant of grace and justice with the people of Israel throughout the ages.

Luke 1:26-38 Context: Luke’s Gospel opens with the annunciation in Jerusalem by the angel Gabriel to the old priest Zechariah that his elderly wife Elizabeth, who had never borne children, would bear a son, John, who would set the stage for the Lord’s coming. Six months into her pregnancy, Gabriel appears again, this time to a young woman in Nazareth, engaged but not yet married, to announce to her that she had been chosen to give birth to the Son of God. What Gabriel proclaims will be fulfilled in Jesus echoes the promise of God to David in 2 Samuel 7, but in a way that David could not have imagined. When Mary questions Gabriel, the angel points to the example of Elizabeth, making the case that “nothing is impossible with God.”

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 and Luke 1:26-38

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 and Luke 1:26-38 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- When does David realize the situation of where he lives versus where God’s “home” is? [During a time of rest and reflection (v. 1).] What does David propose to do about this situation? How do

you think David reacted when Nathan announced that instead of David building God a house, God would be building David a house or lineage?

- What do we learn about God from this passage? [God is not caught up in appearances. God desires to be among the people, in their hurts and pains as God works to provide a place for them to rest. God desires a people who reflect God's nature (v. 10).]
- Who was more surprised in these two stories, David or Mary? Why?
- Why is part of the Christmas message that nothing is impossible for God?
- Imagine salvation is like a house. Where are you in relationship to the house? Still outside? On the porch about to come in? In the doorway? In the hallway headed deeper in the house? In the living room by the fire? In an upstairs bedroom?
- What are your hopes for this Christmas?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Holy God who is active and moving among us, we continue to be surprised at how you are concerned for us. Give us the eyes of faith that we might be surprised by your presence the ways you are working within us and within our world this Christmas. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.