

JANUARY 1, 2023  
FIRST SUNDAY  
AFTER CHRISTMAS



*Jesus enters our world of fears and insecurities.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 2:13-23	The escape to Egypt
Monday	Isaiah 63:7-9	God's mercy remembered
Tuesday	Hebrews 2:10-18	Jesus the high priest
Wednesday	2 Timothy 1:1-7	Thanksgiving and encouragement
Thursday	Isaiah 41:2-10	Israel assured of God's help
Friday	1 Chronicles 28:19-21	David encourages Solomon
Saturday	Psalms 148	Let all things praise the Lord
Sunday	Matthew 3:13-17	The baptism of Jesus

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Matthew 2:13 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Redeeming God, give us comfort to know your love and compassion to care for others as you love us through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we give you thanks and praise for your goodness, mercy, and steadfast love that brings forth food from the earth to give us strength and health. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the presence of God fill you with mercy and steadfast love. (Isaiah 63:7-9)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Go Tell It on the Mountain*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How do you tend to treat others when they are worried or afraid?
- How do others help you move beyond your fears and worries?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read: Matthew 2:1-13.*

The Christmas season deals honestly with our broken world and lives. Jesus and his parents experience a world that displays fear, threat, pain, and death, even for little children. The coming of Jesus makes it clear that it is in suffering that God's perfect work of love takes place (Hebrews 2:10). Joseph has to flee with his family to protect them from political powers that want the status quo, not salvation. The holy family experiences a life similar to all refugees who know too well what it means to leave their own homeland to seek refuge. Even the family's return to Bethlehem gets derailed by ongoing threats that redirects them to a new residence in Nazareth. Our Savior experiences the instability, fear, hate, and insecurities all too common in life. There is a judgment here on all of us when we contribute to the fears and insecurities of others while we seek our own advantage, our own security. Our Savior comes to save us from our misguided longings and fears.

*Discuss:* How does faith in Christ free you from your fears and insecurities that get in the way of caring for others?

*Pray:* **Merciful God, we thank you that you enter our world and our lives to turn our fears into compassion and insecurities into trust through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you help refugees and others who live without enough food or shelter?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

As you read Psalm 148, highlight or circle the word praise in each verse. On a separate piece of paper list all those things in God's creation that are praising God throughout Psalm 148, for instance, the sun, the moon, and even sea monsters! Think or talk about how each of the things from God's creation on your list can praise and glorify God (for example, the sun and moon by shining and sea monsters by splashing with joy).

*Say:* **Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise the Lord!** (Psalm 148:1)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)