

# ELIZABETH'S SONG

## OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, open our lips;  
And our mouth  
shall show forth your praise.

O God,  
make speed to save us.  
O Lord,  
make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son:  
and to the Spirit

As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be:  
world without end.  
Amen.



Merciful God,  
who sent your messengers  
the prophets to preach repentance  
and prepare the way  
for our salvation:

Give us grace  
to heed their warnings  
and forsake our sins,  
that we may greet with joy  
the coming of Jesus Christ  
our Redeemer;  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.



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## PSALM 25:1-5

O Lord, I come before you in prayer.

2 My God, I trust in you.  
Please do not let me be humiliated;  
do not let my enemies triumphantly rejoice over me.

3 Certainly none who rely on you will be humiliated.  
Those who deal in treachery will be thwarted and humiliated.

4 Make me understand your ways, O Lord.  
Teach me your paths.

5 Guide me into your truth and teach me.  
For you are the God who delivers me;  
on you I rely all day long.

...

## GENESIS 12 & 18

**12:1** Now the Lord said to Abram,

"Go out from your country, your relatives,  
and your father's household to the land that I will show you.

2 Then I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you, and I will make your name great,  
so that you will exemplify divine blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,  
but the one who treats you lightly I must curse,

## CONFESSION

Most merciful God,  
we confess  
that we have sinned against you  
in thought,  
word,  
and deed,

by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you  
with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors  
as ourselves.

We are truly sorry  
and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son  
Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us  
and forgive us;

that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name.

Amen.



Grant your faithful people,  
merciful Lord,  
pardon and peace;

that we may be cleansed  
from all our sins,  
and serve you with a quiet mind;

through Jesus Christ  
our Lord.

Amen.

so that all the families of the earth  
may receive blessing through you."

4 So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.)

...

**17:**1 When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the sovereign God. Walk before me and be blameless. 2 Then I will confirm my covenant between me and you, and I will give you a multitude of descendants."

...

**18:**1 The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest time of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing across from him. When he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. ... 9 Then they asked him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" He replied, "There, in the tent." 10 One of them said, "I will surely return to you when the season comes round again, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" (Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, not far behind him. 11 Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years; Sarah had long since passed menopause.) 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, "After I am worn out will I have pleasure, especially when my husband is old too?" 13 The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child when I am old?' 14 Is anything impossible for the Lord? I will return to you when the season comes round again and Sarah will have a son." 15 Then Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh," because she was afraid. But the Lord said, "No! You did laugh."

## ISAIAH 54:1-10

1 "Shout for joy, O barren one who has not given birth! Give a joyful shout and cry out, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one are more numerous than the children of the married woman," says the Lord.

...

4 Don't be afraid, for you will not be put to shame.  
Don't be intimidated, for you will not be humiliated.

## THANKSGIVING & INTERCESSION

God of hope,  
you raised up John the baptizer  
as a herald who calls us to  
conversion.

As we joyfully await the glorious  
coming of Christ,  
we pray to you for the needs of the  
church and the world.



*Pause here to note & pray for:*

*- personal concerns - prayer for family - friends  
and neighbors - church leaders - community &  
government - thanksgiving & praise*

You will forget about the shame you experienced in your youth;  
you will no longer remember the disgrace of your abandonment.

5 For your husband is the one who made you—  
the Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name.

He is your Protector, the Holy One of Israel.

He is called "God of the entire earth."

...

10 Even if the mountains are removed  
and the hills displaced,

my devotion will not be removed from you,  
nor will my covenant of friendship be displaced,"  
says the Lord, the one who has compassion on you.

## MALACHI 3:1 & 4:4-6

**3:1** "I am about to send my messenger, who will clear the way  
before me. Indeed, the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to  
his temple, and the messenger of the covenant, whom you long for,  
is certainly coming," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

...

**4:4** "Remember the law of my servant Moses, to whom at Horeb I  
gave rules and regulations for all Israel to obey. 5 Look, I will send  
you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord  
arrives. 6 He will encourage fathers and their children to return to  
me, so that I will not come and strike the earth with judgment."

## LUKE 1:1-25

1 Now many have undertaken to compile an account of the things  
that have been fulfilled among us, 2 like the accounts passed on to  
us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from  
the beginning. 3 So it seemed good to me as well, because I have  
followed all things carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly  
account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may  
know for certain the things you were taught.

5 During the reign of Herod king of Judea, there lived a priest  
named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah,  
and he had a wife named Elizabeth, who was a descendant of  
Aaron. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, following all  
the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. 7 But

*Concluding with:*



Hear our humble prayer  
that we may serve you  
in holiness and faith  
and give voice  
to your presence among us  
until the day  
of the coming of your Son,  
Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns  
for ever and ever.

Amen.

# 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.

And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

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



## COLLECT (CLOSING PRAYER)

God of hope,  
you call us home from the exile of  
selfish oppression  
to the freedom of justice,  
the balm of healing,  
and the joy of sharing.

Make us strong  
to join you in your holy work,  
as friends of strangers and victims,  
companions of those  
whom others shun,  
and as the happiness of those  
whose hearts are broken.

We make our prayer  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—

May the God of hope fill you  
with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
you may abound in hope.

Amen

they did not have a child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both very old.

8 Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the Holy Place of the Lord and burn incense. 10 Now the whole crowd of people were praying outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 An angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense, appeared to him. 12 And Zechariah, visibly shaken when he saw the angel, was seized with fear. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; you will name him John. 14 Joy and gladness will come to you, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. 16 He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go as forerunner before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him."

18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is old as well." 19 The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will be silent, unable to speak, until the day these things take place."

21 Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they began to wonder why he was delayed in the Holy Place. 22 When he came out, he was not able to speak to them. They realized that he had seen a vision in the Holy Place, because he was making signs to them and remained unable to speak. 23 When his time of service was over, he went to his home.

24 After some time his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and for five months she kept herself in seclusion. She said, 25 "This is what the Lord has done for me at the time when he has been gracious to me, to take away my disgrace among people."

## LISTEN

### Hungry For The Light

- Jacob Early, 2023

### Good News

- Graham Jones, 2021

## REFLECT



### Visitation

-El Greco, ca 1610

[-commentary on art](#)



### Visitation

-Jacopo da Pontormo, 1516

[-commentary on art](#)

# HEBREWS 11

1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see. 2 For by it the people of old received God's commendation

...

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith, even though Sarah herself was barren and he was too old, he received the ability to procreate, because he regarded the one who had given the promise to be trustworthy. 12 So in fact children were fathered by one man—and this one as good as dead—like the number of stars in the sky and like the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore. 13 These all died in faith without receiving the things promised, but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them and acknowledged that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.

...

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets. 33 Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, gained what was promised, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, put foreign armies to flight, 35 and women received back their dead raised to life. But others were tortured, not accepting release, to obtain resurrection to a better life. 36 And others experienced mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, sawed apart, murdered with the sword; they went about in sheepskins and goatskins; they were destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (the world was not worthy of them); they wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and openings in the earth. 39 And these all were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised. 40 For God had provided something better for us, so that they would be made perfect together with us.



# READ

What ways did you choose to read the text this week?

☐ read the pdf ☐ listen to audio ☐ read aloud

Summarize the reading. Where do you see the theme of hope in the text?

# REFLECT

How did you choose to reflect this week?

☐ Art ☐ Music ☐ Journal/Discussion

What stood out to you from the reading and reflection this week? What did you notice about God, yourself, or the world?

What are you curious about? What questions, ideas, or texts would you like to explore more?

# RESPOND

How will you respond to the text?

☐ Pray ☐ Worship ☐ Repent ☐ Act

What would it look like for you to respond this week?

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# THE SONGS OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS



WORKBOOK



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