

# Nudges of the Spirit

## Meditations for December 21<sup>st</sup> to December 27<sup>th</sup>



*Nudges of the Spirit* is currently a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnett and Denise Bersos.  
This week's selections have been written by Carolyn.

**Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>** (Fourth Sunday of Advent) Isaiah 7:10-16 / Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 / Romans 1:1-7 / Matthew 1:18-25 *(written by Carolyn)*

The Collect for today: *Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

My mom-in-law related a story to me about how she was going to be a guest at someone's home, but when she arrived, the room she was to stay in was not ready; other guests were there and all the attention was directed toward them, and in general she just did not feel welcome. I bring this up because Advent is a time when we prepare anew for the coming of Jesus in our lives. Are we in the process of "tidying up" our inward homes that He may feel welcome when He arrives? The good news is that He already knows our messes and, in fact, meets us where we are. Furthermore, Jesus loves us too much to leave us in our messes but instead draws us closer to him. May you have a blessed Christmas week.

*Jesus, please come in and make yourself at home in me. Amen.*

**Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>** (St. Thomas, the Apostle) Habakkuk 2:1-4 / Psalm 126 / Hebrews 10:35–11:1 / John 20:24-29 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 20:28 *Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*

Five words – five simple words give us so much truth. Today we celebrate the life of Thomas the Apostle; the one to whom the name "Doubting Thomas" has been given. He very well could have been "Honest Thomas" or even "Brave Thomas" because they would have fit him also. The five words quoted above give him another designation. He is the first of the disciples to give voice to the divinity of Christ. It's not unusual for us to doubt today – in fact with all of the people trying to perpetrate one scam or another, doubt is probably a good thing. However, when Christ stands in front of you and invites you to touch the wounds in his hands and side, it's time to put our doubts away in order that we may join Thomas and say, "My Lord and my God."

*Jesus, you are my Lord and my God. I praise and worship you this day. Amen*

**Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>** 1 Samuel 2:1b-10 / Psalm 66, 67 / Titus 2:1-10 / Luke 1:26-38 *(written by Carolyn)*

Luke 1:28-29 *And he (the angel Gabriel) came to her (Mary) and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.*

The Message translation of the bible says that Mary was quite shaken by Gabriel's presence and words. Other translations use words like, "confused and disturbed" or "greatly troubled." Somehow, the words, "much perplexed" don't resonate with me. However, some of these other translations do – especially words like shaken and disturbed. I can well imagine my reaction to the sudden appearance of an angel – and I'm not sure "perplexed" would cover my reaction. Yet even though she was surprised, once Mary heard what the angel had to say, she said yes. While none of us will ever be asked to do what Mary did, God does give us little nudges every now and then to be His hands, ears, feet today. Are we willing?

*Lord, guide me to what you would have me do. Amen*

**Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** (Christmas Eve) 2 Samuel 7:1-17 / Psalm 72 / Titus 2:11–3:8a /

Luke 1:39-48a(48b-56) *(written by Carolyn)*

Luke 39:41-42 *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."*

Two words jump out at me from today's verses: leaped and filled. I envision a small child who, upon hearing their parent's car enter the driveway, jumps up and calls out, "Daddy (or Mommy) is home!" There is such excitement and anticipation in that moment – its written all over their face. How can the parent turn a cold shoulder to such a greeting? As we finish our last-minute preparations for this evening, may we keep a watchful eye out for the coming of Jesus into our lives all over again. And when we sense He is near, may we leap for joy at the prospect of being in His presence.

*Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.*

**Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup>** (Christmas Day) Isaiah 9:2-7 / Psalm 96 / Titus 2:11-14 / Luke 2:1-14(15-20) *(written by Carolyn)*

Psalm 96:12 *Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, when he comes to judge the earth.*

Merry Christmas to everyone! May your day be filled with the joy of the Lord. As I write these words, the breeze is blowing outside my window, and I can see the branches of several different species of trees moving back and forth. While I don't hear them making sounds, I can imagine what the psalmist meant when he wrote the verse cited above. It reminds me of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem – where people waved palm branches back and forth and cried Hosanna! Perhaps the movement of the branches is a precursor of what will happen at the second coming of Jesus; or perhaps the trees are waving with joy whenever they sense the Lord is nearby. May we join in their celebration today.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son. Amen.*

**Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup>** (St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr) Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15 / Psalm 31 or 31:1-5 /

Acts 6:8–7:2a, 51c-60 / Matthew 23:34-39 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 6:8 *Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*

It's interesting how our church calendar recognizes the death of Deacon Stephen the day after we celebrate the birth of our Lord. I can't help but want to stay up on the mountain of celebration for a few days before coming back to the reality of being a Christ follower. In a nutshell: after receiving the laying on of hands by the Apostles, Stephen grew in his faith and began doing signs and wonders. Some people got jealous, stirred up the leaders of the temple and as a result, Stephen became the first Christian martyr. Our reminder for today is that yes, darkness is with us still and rears its head at unpredictable times. Perhaps on this second day of the Christmas season, we could ask the Lord to forgive as Stephen did when that darkness is directed towards us.

*Lord, help me to see with your eyes. Amen.*

**Saturday, December 27<sup>th</sup>** (St. John the Apostle) Exodus 33:18-23 / Psalm 92 or 92:1-4, 11-14 / 1 John 1:1-9 /

John 21:19b-24 *(written by Carolyn)*

1 John 1:1 *We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life...*

The verse quoted above sounds very much like the opening sentence of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John was among the few chosen by Jesus to be

a part of His inner circle. He, along with Peter and James, witnessed things the other disciples did not. It's no wonder that the words he uses both in his gospel and letters focus on the divinity of Christ. While Moses was not allowed to see the face of God, John and the other disciples not only saw the face of God's own son, but walked, talked and ate with Him. Their lives were changed forever and, because of their works, ours are as well. Do our lives show Jesus? If your neighbors were to be asked, would they be able to affirm your own walk with Christ?

*Lord, lead my steps. Amen*

