

## Life Group Discussion Guide

Advent

November 28

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ALC Tree Lighting

**Sunday, December 12 | 6-7:30pm** (doors open at 5:30pm)

Mark your calendars for our annual Christmas Tree Lighting event. There will be a photo opportunity, kid's games, fire pits, live animals, hot chocolate, Christmas lights, and a live nativity.

### LEADER NOTES

Christmas time is here! This week Pastor Gareth kicked off our Advent series with an incredible message about hope. Have you ever wondered if God sees you or cares about what is going on in your life? In the books of Isaiah and Luke we find parallel stories of God meeting people right where they are. King Ahaz of Israel is on the brink of battle against a mighty empire. Mary is a teenager betrothed to be married. Both are presented with incredible promises from God. It is their response that makes the difference.

### THIS WEEK'S TEXT

#### Isaiah 7:13-17 (NIV)

*Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?"<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.<sup>15</sup> He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right,<sup>16</sup> for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.<sup>17</sup> The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria."*

#### Luke 1:26-35 (NIV)

*In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,<sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*

*<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.<sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

*<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

### QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, caught your attention, challenged you, or confused you?

### LOOK UP

The promise given to King Ahaz in Isaiah 7 would not come to full fruition until the coming of Jesus of Nazareth hundreds of years later. Is it possible for promises to impact our lives even if we do not see their fulfillment? Why or why not?

### LOOK AROUND

What are you hoping for this Christmas season?

In which areas of your life is it most difficult to recognize that God sees you and cares for you?

In which areas of your life is it most clear that God sees you and cares for you?

### LOOK AHEAD and PRAY

What is keeping you from fully trusting God in this season?

Pray together that God would meet you where you are and sustain your hope.