

“WOMEN OF ADVENT”
“Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah”

We began a new sermon series as we start the Christian year. “The Women of Advent” invites us to consider not only the ancestors of Jesus, but how we carry on their faith and love as the bearers of Christ in our day and time. Over the next few weeks we will focus on the women in the genealogy of Jesus as found in the first chapter of Matthew. This would be interesting in and of itself as in most genealogies’ women are not named and if they are, it is in relationship with their husbands or their fathers. In this listing, not only are these women named, but three of these women are named and the fourth by the name of her murdered husband. Mostly these women are outsiders, of a different ethnic group and are known because of the scandals by which they are associated. We have focused and learned the first three women named: Tamar, Rahab and Ruth. On this fourth Sunday of Advent we are invited into Bathsheba’s story. Like Tamar, this story is not pretty. It is filled with intrigue, adultery and murder. In Matthew, Bathsheba is on the only woman not named. She is noted with the words, “And David was the father of Solomon **by the wife of Uriah.**” Matthew does not let his readers forget the ugliness of this story. David’s selfishness and greed causes pain to Bathsheba, death to Uriah and would haunt him the rest of his days. As we will see, Bathsheba is not blamed, and Solomon becomes the wisest of kings. Bathsheba may have been placed in an awful situation, but God uses her to bring us Jesus. This week we seek the love of God as we enter the final Sunday before the birth of Christ.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah”**

Daily prayer: *O God, may we be open to your promises, your love, and your transformation. May we vision and dream. May we be surprised. May we receive the life you give us. May we encounter Emmanuel—God with us. And may we never be the same. Amen* (www.ministrymatters.com)

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, December 23, 2019 2 Samuel 11: 1-27

This is the basic story of David and Bathsheba. Instead of being out with his troops David is hanging out at the palace. He sees a woman; he wants her, and he sends his servants to go get her. Notice we are not told what Bathsheba thought, whether she resisted or under what pretense David used to get her into his house. What we know is that she becomes pregnant and David has her husband killed. This story is one of greed, selfishness, intrigue, adultery and murder. Bathsheba grieves the loss of her husband, but David brings her back to his house and makes her one of his wives. Scripture does not cover up the stories of God's people sinning. Favored King David falls and falls hard. Yet, still, God's grace will turn this story into hope. *Has there been a time in your life, when you have harmed others, like David, or been victimized like Bathsheba? Has God enabled you to use those experiences to help you grow spirituality? Or have those experiences helped you find your way to God?*

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 Matthew 1: 18-25

This is Matthew's version of the Christmas story. Certainly, Joseph would have been familiar with the stories of these women, but not how it pertains to him. He only knows he feels betrayed and alone. Perhaps, as a good man and a faithful one, that is why he paused and pondered what he would do in reaction to Mary's pregnancy. The good news is that he receives a visitation in a dream and tells him not to be afraid. How often do we need to hear in our lives "*don't be afraid*". God is with us, in awkwardness, in despair and in every part of our lives, joy and sorrow, highs and lows. *On this Holy night, open yourself to God's presence. God is with you and me and with us all as we prepare for the birth of Emmanuel, God-with-us.*

Wednesday December 25, 2019 Luke 2: 1-14

Merry Christmas! Today we celebrate the birth of God with us, Jesus. It is the first day of Christmas. As you read those first few verses, can you hear the sounds, feel the excitement and the fatigue? Can you experience the promise inherent in this wonderful story of Jesus' birth? *Find a quiet space and time on this holy and sacred day to say thank you and feel again God's love and grace for you, for us, born this day. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace for those with whom God is well pleased!"*

Thursday December 26, 2019 Matthew 1: 1-16

Our sermon series for Advent was based on the women found in Matthew's genealogy; Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba. They were outsiders. These women were Canaanites, Moabite, and the wife of Hittite, women of questionable reputations and placed in awkward and awful situations. When added to Mary's story, their faithfulness is a witness generation to generation to God's presence with us. Out of their desperate situations God gives hope, peace, joy and love. Out of our desperate and crazy situations, God gives grace, hope, faith and peace. *How do you find ways to experience all that God offers in our lives? What rituals help you find hope, peace, joy and love? Where do you see "Emmanuel" God-with-us in our world today?*

Friday December 27, 2019 Luke 2: 15-20

The angels come and go, the shepherds as well, Mary is left to ponder what has occurred. It doesn't say Joseph, but I suspect he was thinking about everything that had happened as well. This birth, the witness of the shepherds, the story of the angels must have seemed crazy, scary and amazing all at the same time. Mary and Joseph are now ancestors of Jesus and they have no idea what this will mean until they live it out day by day. Did you ever wonder how hard it must have been for them? The whispers and weird looks, the comments they would have received? And yet, they, like the women of Advent, remained faithful. They trusted that God would see them through the ups and downs of raising this child. *How do you remain faithful when times are tough? On this third day of Christmas, where do you see God at work in your life?*