

# *Unfolding the Word*

## *Advent*

### Opening Prayer

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples said,  
'were not our hearts burning within us as he  
opened the scriptures to us'.

Lord,  
Open our minds to your gospel message,  
Help us to listen to it more attentively,  
Help us to understand it more clearly  
Help us to live it more faithfully.  
Amen



<sup>NRS</sup> **Luke 2:1– 10 The Birth of Jesus**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.<sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.<sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered.<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.<sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.<sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.<sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.<sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:<sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.<sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."<sup>13</sup> And suddenly

there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."<sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.<sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;<sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.<sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Questions for Consideration:

1. What makes this story so special? How do we explain it?
2. Our God became one of us. What does that mean?
3. Mary, angels, shepherds are all present at the birth. What message do they have for us today?