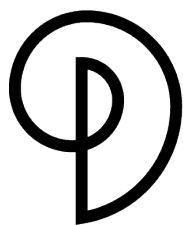


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



God Meets Us In Our Fears

December 3 & 4, 2022

When an angel announced to Mary that she would bear a child – and not just any child, but the Son of God - that news must have caused Mary some serious fear and anxiety. Mary's story teaches us that because God's Spirit is with us and God's Spirit is for us, our fear can be held in tension with wonder. So, like Mary, we can do the bold and brave thing for the sake of the world even when we're afraid.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: LUKE 1:26-38

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

When the angel Gabriel comes to Mary, she is perplexed and confused—and no doubt, afraid. And yet, the angel's message is: "Do not be afraid." We hear this refrain all throughout the Christmas story; In fact, it is the most common phrase in all the bible. From generation to generation, God shows up in the midst of our fear, uncertainty, and confusion. And, from generation to generation, faithful people have said, "yes" to God's calling in their lives despite their apprehension.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *"From generation to generation, fear has played a prominent role in the drama of our lives."* Share a story from your life where fear played a prominent role.
- *"Because God's Spirit is with us and God's Spirit is for us, our fear can be held in tension with wonder. So, we can do the bold and brave thing for the sake of the world even when we're afraid."* Where have you found this statement to be true in stories you've read in the Bible? In stories you've heard in the news? In stories handed down in your family? In your own story?
- Pastor Jeff lists several thoughts he imagines went through Mary's mind during her visit from Gabriel. As a group, brainstorm some other thoughts/fears she may have had. Then, share with one another about troubling thoughts/fears you currently have going through your mind. Pray together using Isaiah 41:10 as a prayer guide.
- *"Mary's story teaches us that when God meets us in our fear, we can also experience a sense of awe and wonder."* Tell about a recent time when you have experienced a sense of awe and wonder. How was God present in your experience?

CHALLENGE: Let the Good News that God's Spirit is with you and God's Spirit is for you birth within you enough awe and wonder to empower you to do the bold and brave thing for the sake of the world, whatever that might be, even though you may still feel afraid.