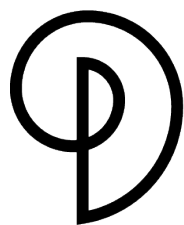
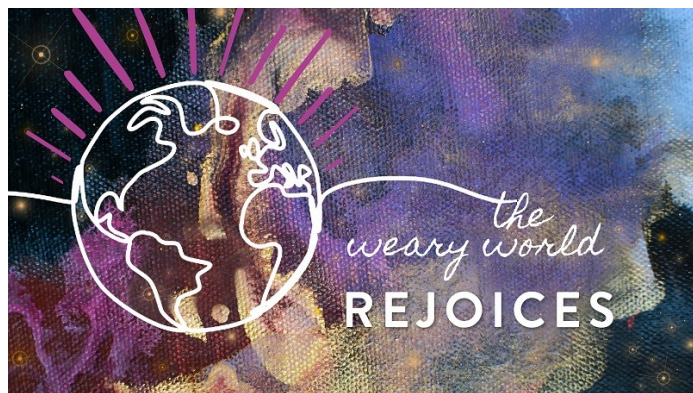


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



We are Connected

December 2 & 3, 2023

When we can't rejoice, we can carry each other's joy. That is what Elizabeth and Mary do for each other. Elizabeth's joy is contagious and wraps around Mary like a hug. Through the prophet Isaiah, we hear God speak tender words of comfort; this is the comfort we can give to and receive from each other during this season.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ISAIAH 40:1-11, LUKE 1:24-45

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

This reading is so important for our understanding of the Christmas story and yet we often skip it. You see, Israel is a people living on the prayer that God would step into time and space to renew, restore, and reconcile them as God's people. Everyone is praying that prayer, including Elizabeth, Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph. But it's one thing to pray that prayer, and a completely different thing when it's your womb and your baby. There Elizabeth is, called to be the mother of John the Baptist. And there Mary is, called to be the mother of Jesus. And they come together to sort out what it all means for their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ***The time and place that God shows up to invite us into God's work in the world is unexpected.*** Share a story about an unexpected time/place that you were invited into God's work in the world. What ministry were you able to provide in that time and place? How did God use you in a profound way?
- ***God isn't done fulfilling promises and using you to make a difference in the world.*** In this season of great need, how are you feeling nudged by God to "carry the spirit of Christ?" How might you "bring good news and/or God's power" to make a difference in the world this week?
- Who is someone you know that could use some tender words of comfort today? Collaborate with your small group to choose the words that could bring comfort. If there are no words, brainstorm together how to provide comfort in another tangible way. What words of comfort do you need to hear today?
- How can you, like Mary, make yourself available, mobile, and present in this season? Is it by strategically saying "no" to some things? What are those things that are preventing you from saying to God, "May your word to me be fulfilled."

CHALLENGE: Create time and space for connection throughout this Advent season.