

3. Mary asks Gabriel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"
 - a. What other questions might Mary have asked beginning with the words "How can this be _____?"
 - b. What questions concerning your life would you ask God beginning with the words "How can this be _____?"
4. Why do you think God considers Mary a "favored one"?
5. Are you favored by God?
6. Mary's life will not be easy. When will she experience joy?
7. When do you experience joy?

Prayer for this fourth week of Advent:

Holy God, we know that receiving your favor does not ensure a life of ease. When we wonder how your plans will come to pass, guide us and strengthen us. Thank you for walking with us through the joys and pains. Help us, like Mary, to prepare for Jesus' arrival. In the name of your incarnate Son we pray. Amen.



*Touching heaven, changing earth
with head, heart and hands*

**Sunday, December 18, 2016
Luke 1:26-33**

We offer these questions for reflection during the service or during your week. Ponder them yourself, or discuss them with friends. Many small groups use them for discussion; if you would like to participate in a group, visit www.laumc.org/grouplife.

1. The angel Gabriel says to Mary, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28, NRSV).
 - a. If you were writing this script, how would you have Mary respond?
 - b. How would you respond if you were greeted this way?
2. The Annunciation has many interpretations in works of art. The "favored" Mary is depicted as fearful or soulful, innocent or submissive, thoughtful or perplexed, demure or assertive.
 - a. How would you depict "favored" Mary as she hears Gabriel's announcement of the incarnation?
 - b. How would you depict Gabriel as he makes this announcement to God's "favored" one?

