

WEEK 1: HOPE

Here are the materials we will be using for week 1. You are welcome to use them any way you choose and may consider waiting until the gathering to engage with them for the first time. Included each week will be the reading, the visual and musical pieces, as well as some reflection questions. We hope for a rich time of wondering as you deeply explore the story of God in new ways.

Reading: [Luke 1:26–38](#)

Mary



“Henry Ossawa Tanner saw Mary, mother of Jesus, as a symbol of faith and fortitude. He painted many images of her and created this particular work during a difficult and trying time in his life. In 1914, the year his mother died, the outbreak of World War I forced his family to flee France for England. In this scene, Mary awaits the arrival of the angel who will tell her that she bears the Son of God. The glowing lamp, a symbol of God’s presence, adds mystery and suspense to the painting.”

[Mary: Henry Ossawa Tanner 1914 oil on canvas](#)

Reflection Questions

These are for your use or not during the visio divina, music listening and personal reflection times.

1. What part of the image are you drawn to? Spend some time there and notice what stirs within you. (images, body sensations, emotions, memories, etc.)
2. Allow what has been revealed to unfold in your imagination. How might this be connected to life in the present?
3. Do you have a sense of God's invitation for yourself or the group? What might that be?

Music for silence

During the gatherings, music will be played as a way to enhance the reflection or offer a different reflection opportunity. You are invited to listen in a comfortable posture, with body relaxed and eyes closed, or however you feel comfortable.

[Enigma Variations on an Original Theme - Elgar Variation IX. Nimrod](#)

If you would like a prompt for the music: *Imagine the dynamics of the piece are the light in Mary's hand shining brighter and brighter? What do you notice?*

Closing Song

Each week we will close our time with a song with lyrics. You are invited to join in the singing (on mute) if you would like. The lyrics and the link to a recording (if one exists) will be provided each week for your reference.

We Watch for the Light

- Emily Parsons Dickau

We watch for the light (x4)

We wait, we trust, we hope (x2)

Your light will come, it is greater than our fear

Your light will come, it is greater than our darkness (x2)

[Grandview Advent Music - We Watch for the Light](#) (scroll down to it)

May you be the light of hope in the world. Amen.