VOLUME 4 - ADVENT



DRAWING CLOSER

Exploring Scripture through art

USING DRAWING CLOSER

This volume of **Drawing Closer** explores the journey through advent towards Christmas. Salvationist artist Gill Parish and Major Ann Montgomery have reflected on this season and created their own responses.

For those who are artistically gifted, these reflections alone may be enough to inspire visual responses.

However, as Drawing Closer is designed as an accessible resource, additional resources are provided for those who need a little more inspiration:

- Colouring sheets
- Sheets with the relevant Scripture verse

Participants can use the sheets, bring their own sketch books or even draw straight onto the pages of their Bible.



THE SESSION

1. Read the selected passage and thought aloud together.
2. Give participants time to create, using the included resources or their own imagination.
3. While creating, encourage conversation and gently discuss what the statement means to participants.
4. At the end of the session, ask participants if they want to show their work to the group, or explain what their thoughts were when creating.
5. Finish with the prayer provided.

Helpful Questions

What image jumps out at you from these verses?

Are there any words/ideas that you don't understand from this passage?

Does anyone have a translation of the passage that is different?

How do you think participants in this event felt?

MOMENTS OF MAGNITUDE

Luke 1:26-38

This is huge! How? Why?

Have you ever felt like that? I wonder what Mary thought when the angel Gabriel appeared to her, a young virgin girl. Was it fear? Disbelief? Maybe some confusion and concern about the message she had received?

Of course reassurance was given by the angel in the words '**Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus**' (Luke 1:30-31), but would these words really have calmed her fears? Taken away her confusion?

This was a life changing moment for Mary. Not only was she to become a mother (and that's life changing enough!) but Mary was to be the mother of **the Son of God** (Luke 1:35). God himself had chosen to place his hope for the world in her!

We see in Luke's gospel 1:38 a true sense of surrender and acceptance by Mary in her response. '**I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said**'. But when was the moment that fear and confusion changed to faithful submission and contentment?

Mary knew that her cousin Elizabeth was longing for a child, howver age was against her and to the human mind it was impossible. So, the wonderful news brought to Mary by Gabriel of Elizabeth's pregnancy affirmed once again the sovereignty and power of our Almighty God and the truth that nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible to God!

Do you believe that?

Have you, like Mary, had a moment of magnitude? Has God, or is God, asking something of you - placing his hope in you? Is it a big ask? Does it feel too big, or even impossible?

Will you respond by saying 'I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said'?

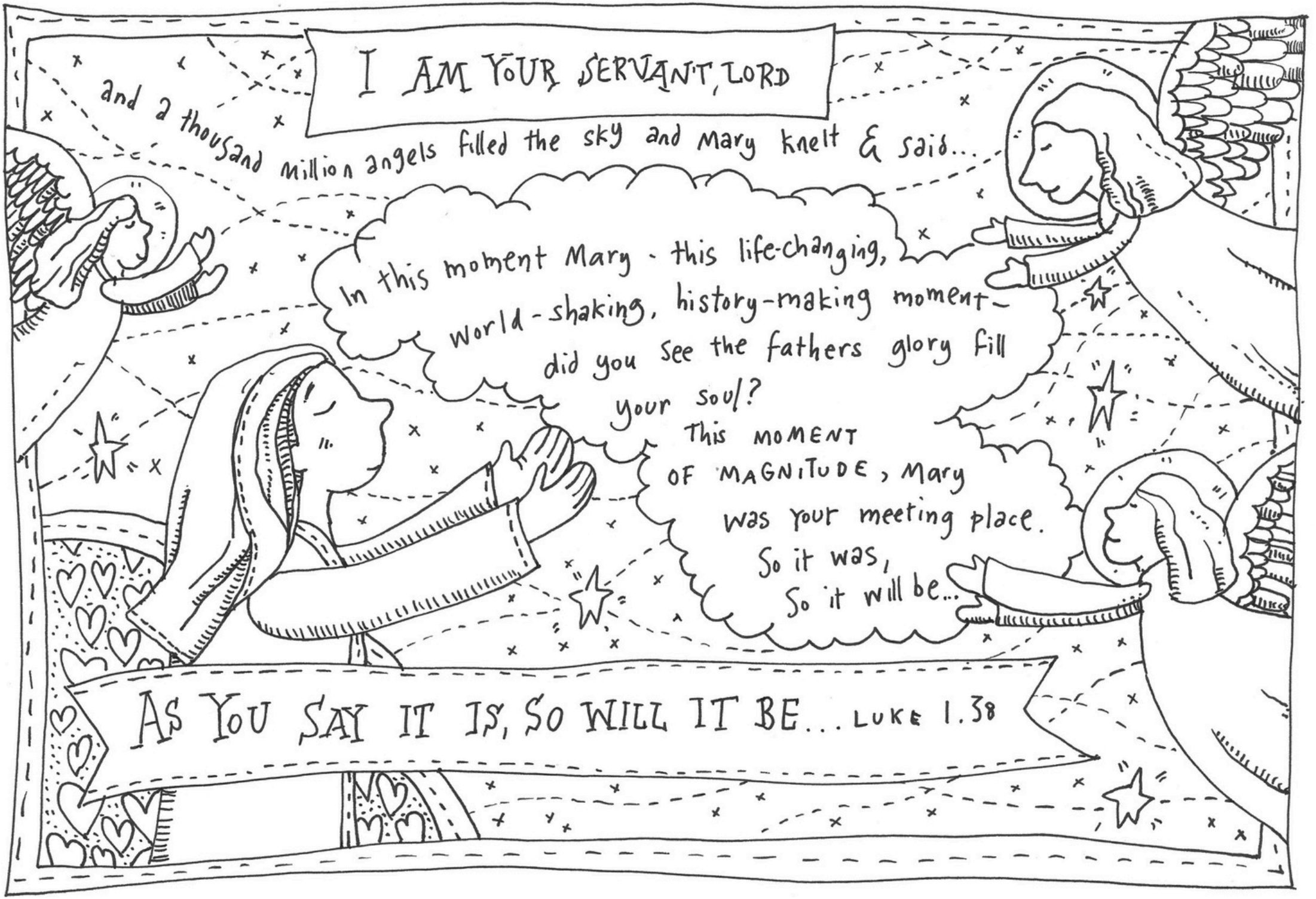
As you reflect on that moment, thank God for the example of faithful submission by Mary and thank Him for His faithfulness to you as you continue to trust in Him.

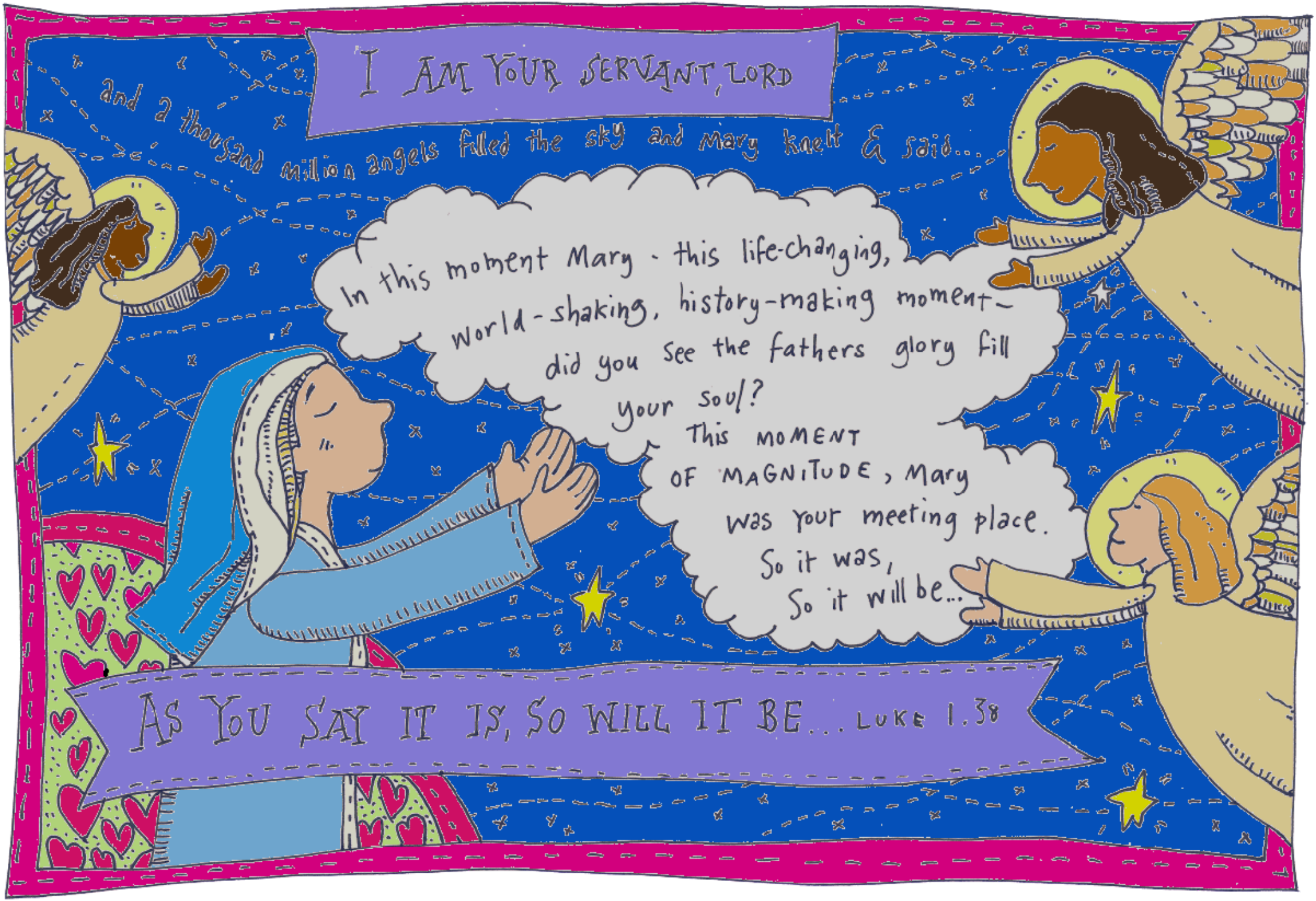
PRAYER

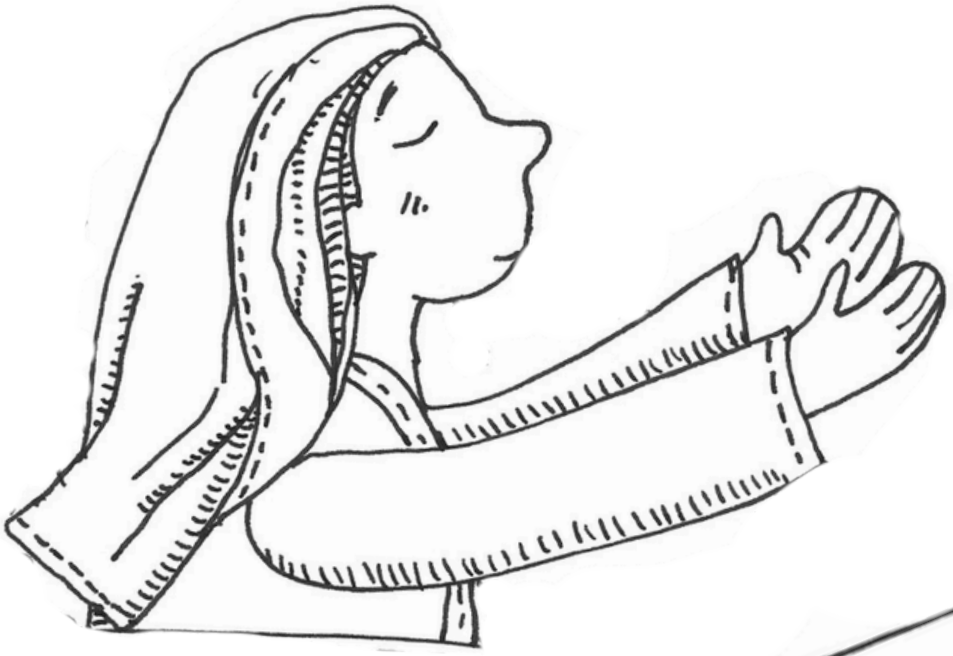
Lord God,

We thank you that you are the God of the seemingly impossible. When we are faced with overwhelming and confusion situations help us to turn to you, and like Mary, have the faith to say 'may it be as you have said'.

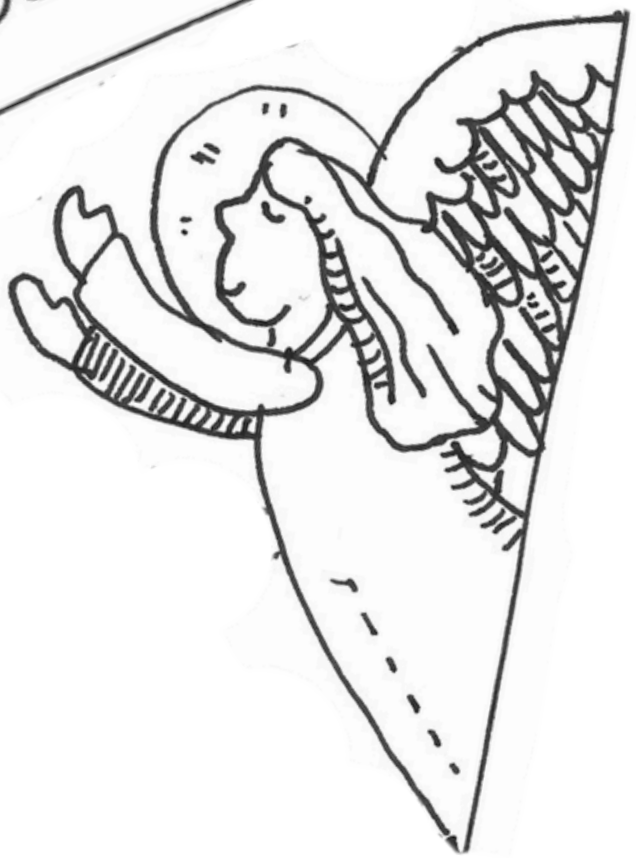
Amen


I AM YOUR SERVANT, LORD
and a thousand million angels filled the sky and Mary knelt & said...
In this moment Mary - this life-changing, world-shaking, history-making moment - did you see the fathers glory fill your soul?
This MOMENT OF MAGNITUDE, Mary was your meeting place.
So it was,
So it will be...
AS YOU SAY IT IS, SO WILL IT BE... LUKE 1.38

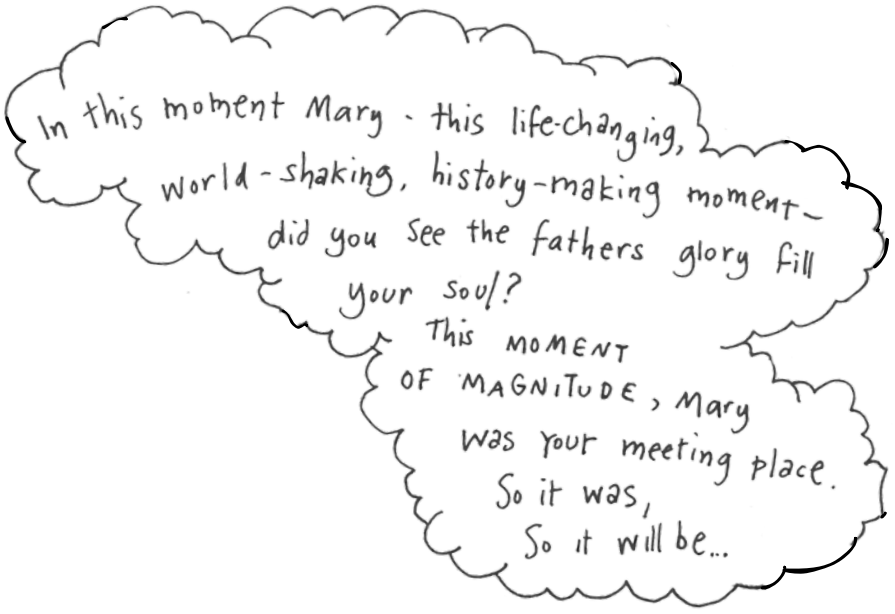

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A MOMENT OF CLARITY

Matthew 1:18-24

Have you ever experienced driving in thick fog - struggling to see what's on the road ahead? The wipers are going and the lights are one, but it doesn't seem to make any difference!

It can be quite scary, until the fog clears and you can breathe a sigh of relief. You can see again and the way is clear once more.

When Joseph heard the news that Mary was '**with child through the Holy Spirit**' (Matthew 1:18) I imagine he would have felt he was in a bit of a fog - the way ahead was unknown and he needed to decide what to do next.

Joesph was a good and righteous man. He didn't want to bring shame on Mary, so his first thought was not to cause her unnecessary pain or to seek justice, but rather it was to quietly, discreetly, end their relationship.

I guess the fog felt even more dense as Joseph lay down to sleep that night with a flood of thoughts streaming through his mind. Was he angry at God? Why did God have to choose Mary? What would people say? What would he say to Mary the next morning?

However, God was at work. God knew Joesph's heart and Joseph's initial plans were not to be. For an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream saying '**Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins**'. (Matthew 1:21-22). Joseph would have known this was the fulfilment of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14).

When Joseph woke from his dream I expect he had a clearer mind, a clearer way forward, even a name for the baby! God was in the finest details and the fog had lifted!

His confusion changed to clarity because of his encounter with God.

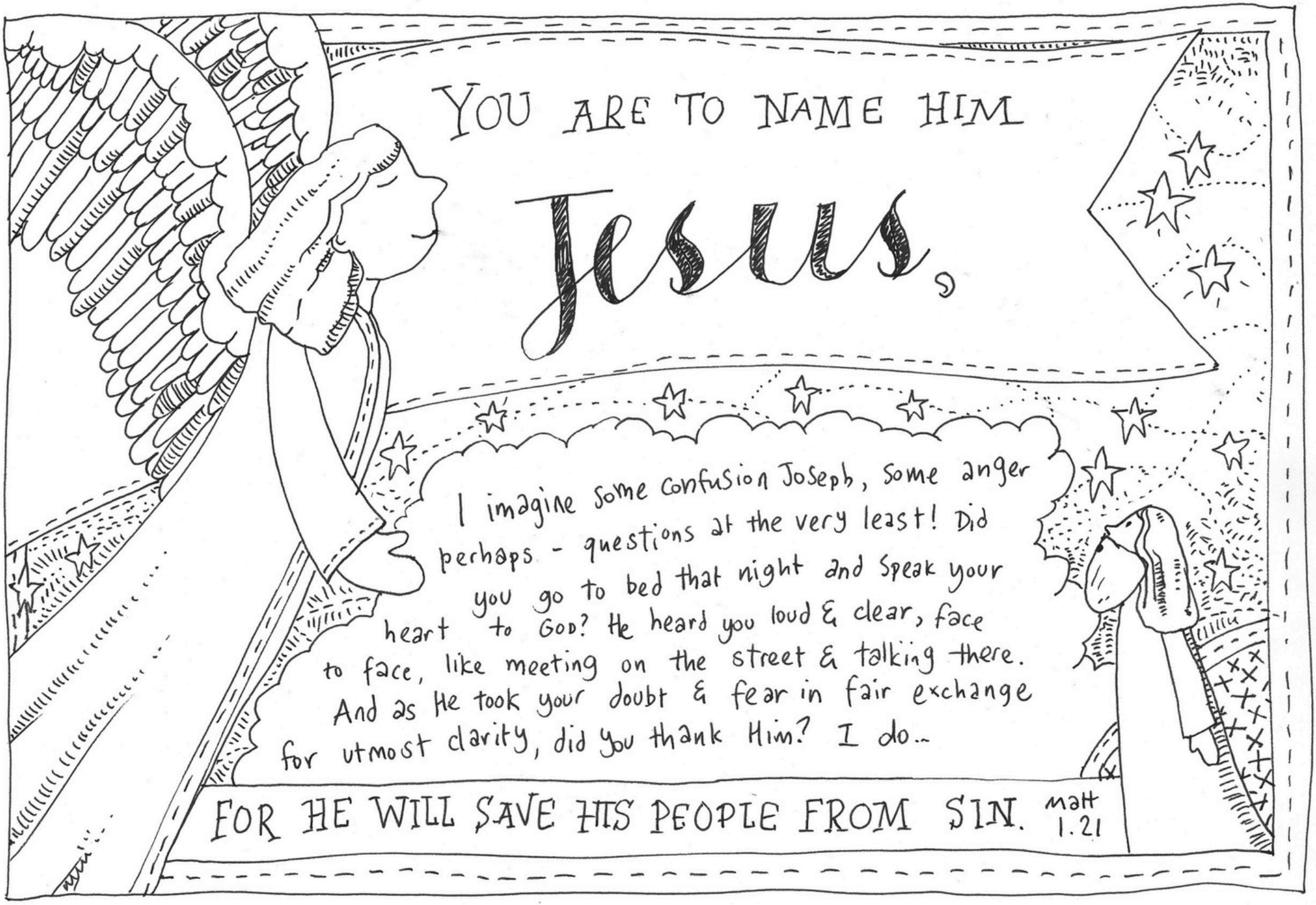
What do we do when faced with confusion and uncertainty?

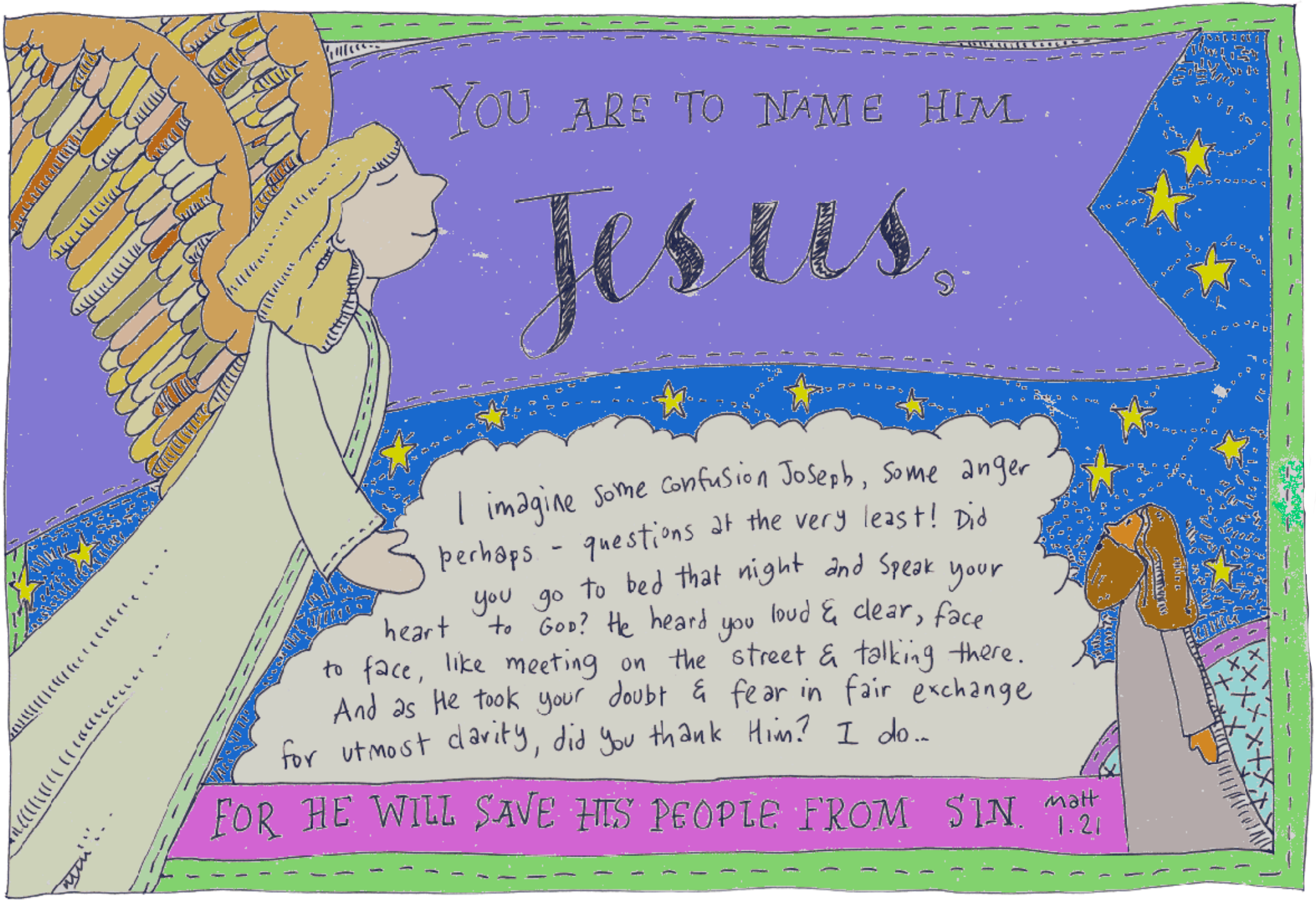
PRAYER

Lord God,

In times of chaos and confusion help us to turn to the wisdom of your perfect plan. Remind us that when we trust in you and follow the example set by your Son, Jesus, we will discover that you are in every detail of our lives. Keep our minds firmly fixed on you and help us to seek your presence.

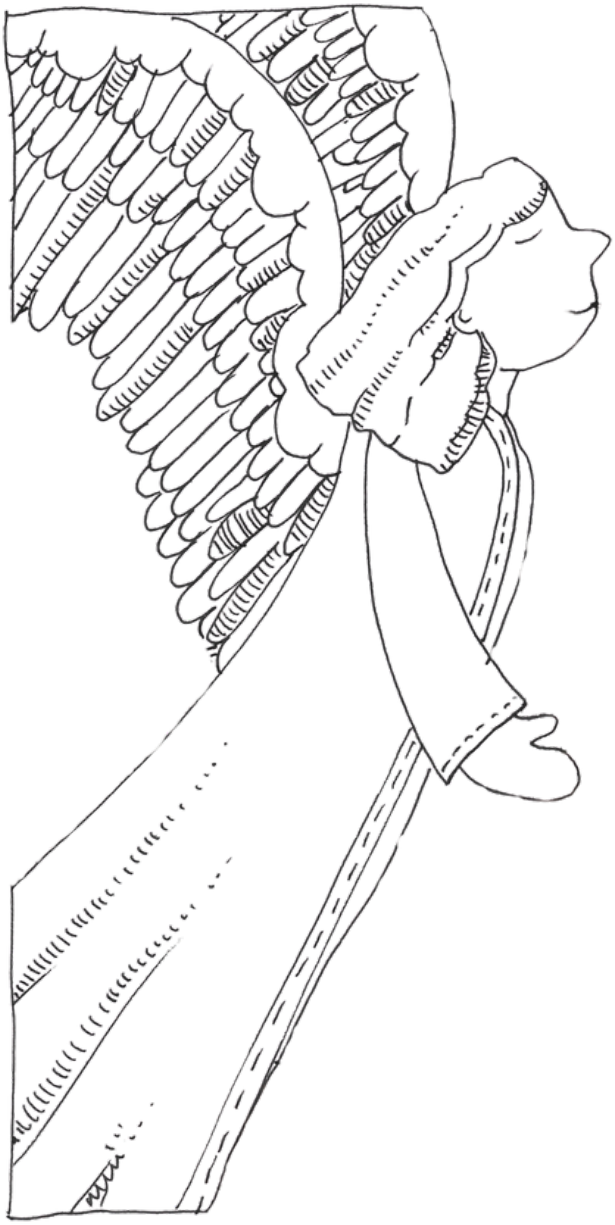
Amen


YOU ARE TO NAME HIM
Jesus,
I imagine some confusion Joseph, some anger perhaps - questions at the very least! Did you go to bed that night and speak your heart to God? He heard you loud & clear, face to face, like meeting on the street & talking there. And as He took your doubt & fear in fair exchange for utmost clarity, did you thank Him? I do..
FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM SIN.
Matt 1.21


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Jesus







A MOMENT OF WONDER

Luke 2:8-19 NIV

Do you like to be surprised?

I guess the answer depends on what the surprise is! If it's something that brings a smile to our faces and fills our hearts with joy and happiness then, yes, we'd probably welcome that surprise.

By what of the Shepherds?

We read in Luke's gospel of the moment when God, through the angel, appeared to the shepherds - all was quiet, all was still and then suddenly an angel appeared. And then we're told even more appeared. 'A great company of the heavenly host appeared before the angel' and 'the glory of The Lord shone around them'.

This glory and the heavenly brightness encircling them, was the manifestation of God's presence and power. God was actually right there on the hillside with them.

What a surprise that must have been. They must have wondered what on earth was happening!

They might have been expecting a cold night, they might have even been expecting to keep some predators away from their flocks, but they certainly wouldn't have been expecting that!

God chose to be with those humble men, undertaking a mundane task over and above everyone else. He invited them to celebrate the birth of the Saviour and to be first to worship at the manger.

I wonder, as they fell at his feet, did those shepherds understand the significance of the baby they had been told about? Could they have known that he would be the **'Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world'?** (John 1:29)

God invites us, humble, ordinary people to accept the Saviour of the world ourselves too. He longs for us to see His glory. To know His presence with us.

Have you ever seen the glory of the Lord in the everyday, mundane experiences of life? The smile of a friend, a ray of sunshine, waves at the beach or a snowflake falling down?

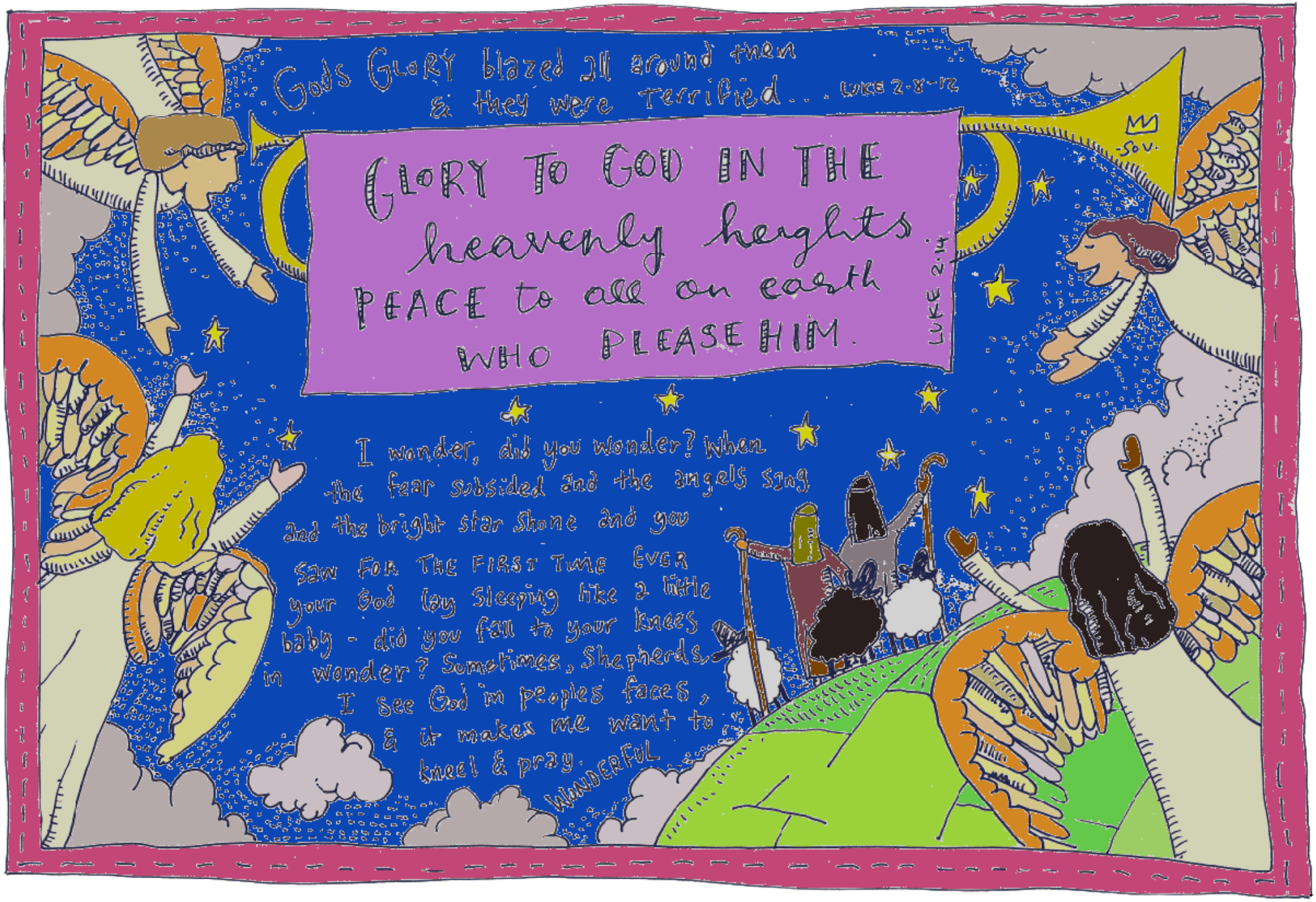
PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

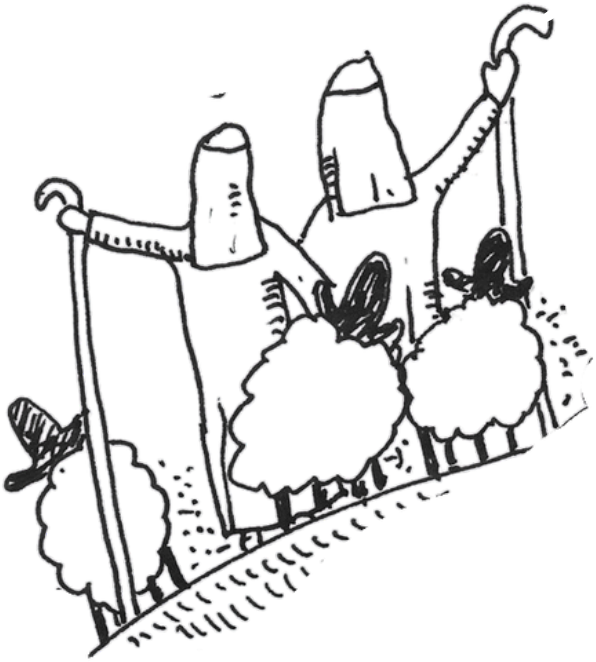
We pray in this season of advent we will experience moments of wonder. Help us to see your glory in the world around us and to sense your presence in a new way.

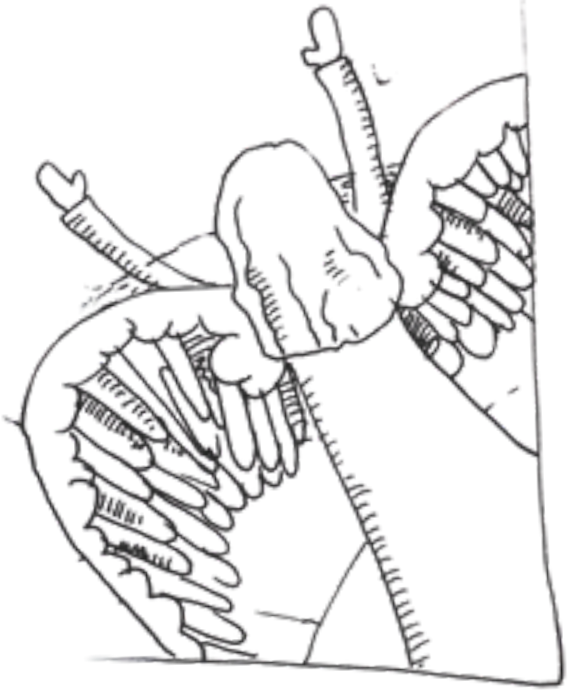
Amen.


Gods Glory blazed all around them
& they were terrified... LUKE 2.8-12
GLORY TO GOD IN THE heavenly heights
PEACE to all on earth
WHO PLEASE HIM.
LUKE 2.14
SOV.
I wonder, did you wonder? When the fear subsided and the angels sang and the bright star shone and you saw FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER your God lay sleeping like a little baby - did you fall to your knees in wonder? Sometimes, Shepherds, I see God in peoples faces, & it makes me want to kneel & pray.
WONDERFUL


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-SOV-


GLORY TO GOD IN THE
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LUKE 2:14
SOV





Do not be afraid.

I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David

A SAVIOUR

has been born to you; he is the Messiah,

THE LORD.

Luke 2:10-11

A MOMENT OF WORSHIP

Matthew 2:10-11

'They saw the child with his mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him'. (Matthew 2:11)

Can you imagine the scene? The Magi had been looking for the new King that they heard had been born. They asked those whom they thought could help them but to no avail. So they followed the star that went ahead of them with great joy and excitement. And now they had arrived!

I wonder what they thought when they realised where it had stopped. Was this right? Could this new king really have been born.... here?

Yet having entered, once their eyes fell upon the Christ child with his mother, in that heartbeat, was the impact so great they could do nothing else but bow down in worship?

Did they kneel before Jesus, anticipating the day when **'At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.** (Philippians 2:10-11)

He was the Messiah and they were in the room! And in that lowly, simple room their hearts were changed and their lives would never be the same again. We know that they changed their habits as they chose to return home by a different route.

We are told that after bowing down in worship they then offered their gifts.

What a privilege is ours that we too can still search and find Jesus today. I wonder if you have had that first encounter with Jesus - have you gazed upon Him and felt your heart change?

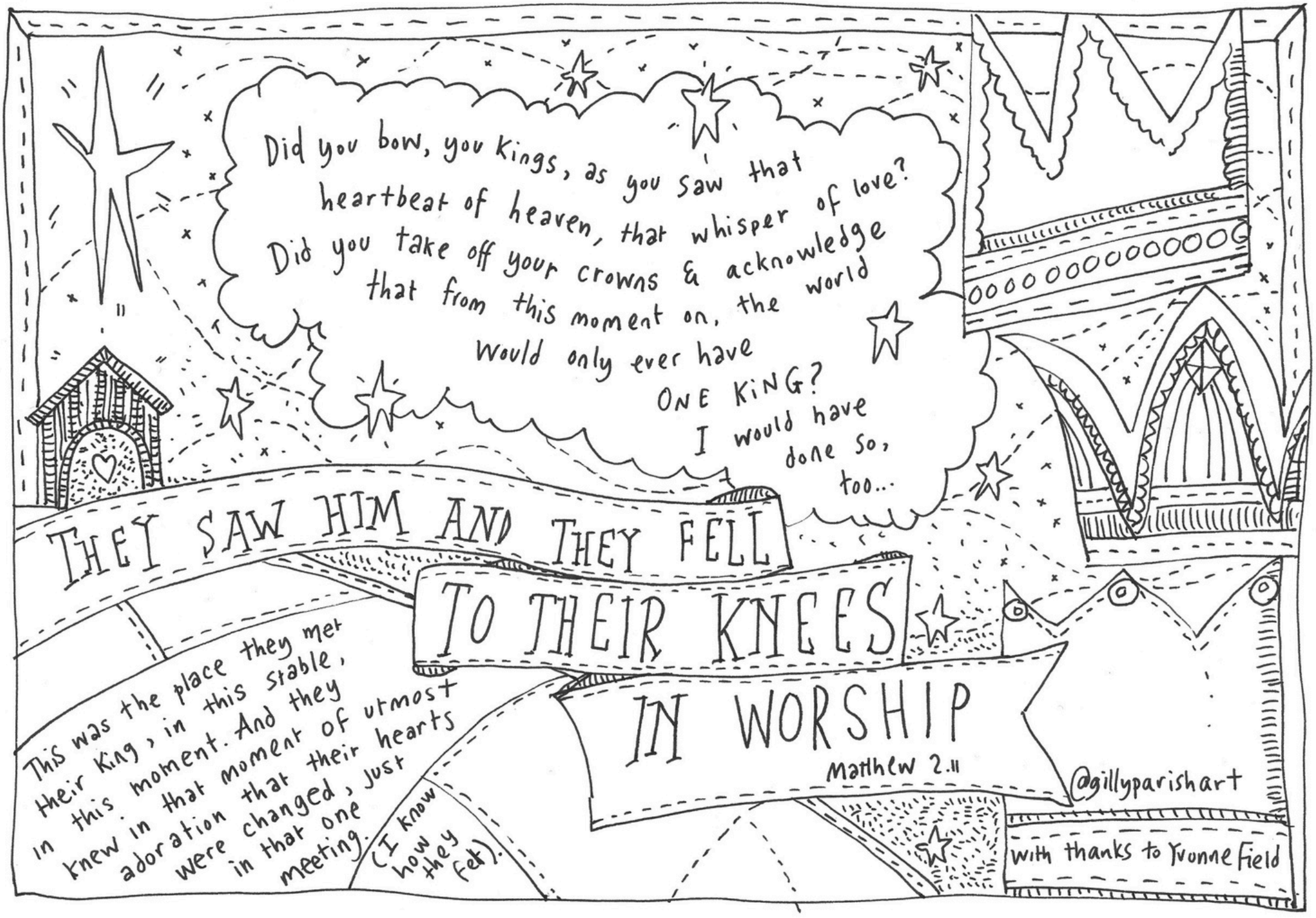
May our hearts rejoice this Christmas as we celebrate that God himself has come to be with us in our room, wherever that may be, and that we too may offer him our all.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

We thank you that all these years after your birth we can still seek and find you. May we each encounter you afresh in this season of advent and worship you in spirit and truth.

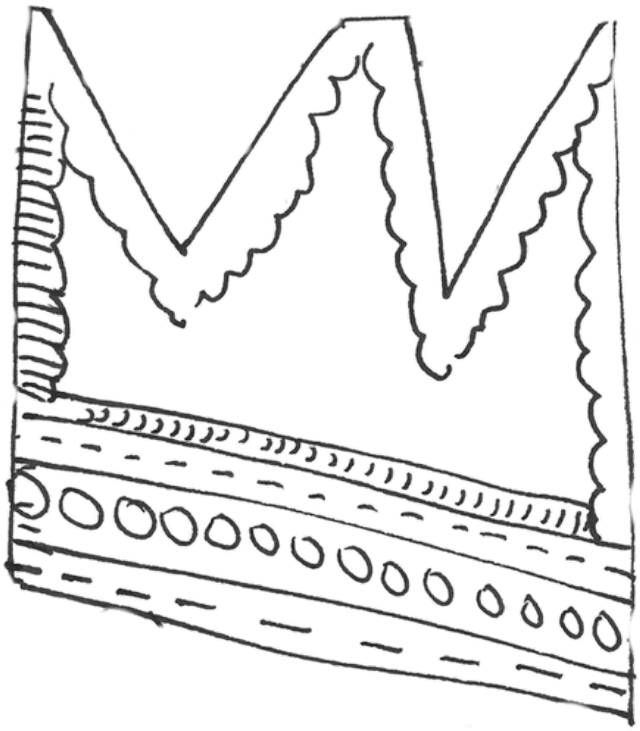
Amen


Did you bow, you kings, as you saw that heartbeat of heaven, that whisper of love? Did you take off your crowns & acknowledge that from this moment on, the world would only ever have ONE KING? I would have done so, too...
THEY SAW HIM AND THEY FELL TO THEIR KNEES IN WORSHIP
Matthew 2.11
This was the place they met their King, in this stable, in this moment. And they knew in that moment of utmost adoration that their hearts were changed, just in that one meeting. (I know how they felt).
@gillyparishart
with thanks to Yvonne Field


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If you've found **Drawing Closer** a useful ministry tool then try our other volumes....







...available now on salvationist.org.uk

SHARE YOUR WORK

We hope you've enjoyed using Drawing Closer throughout advent, and that in doing so, God has blessed you. We would love to see the artwork produced by groups around the territory. Why not take a photo of the work your group has created to share on social media.

Use the hashtag #DrawingCloser and include the relevant Scripture verse in your favourite translation. You'll find The Salvation Army on all major social media platforms.



This volume of Drawing Closer was produced by The Salvation Army Creative Arts team in collaboration with Family Ministries Department in the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory, 2026.

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