

# Reading Luke in Lent

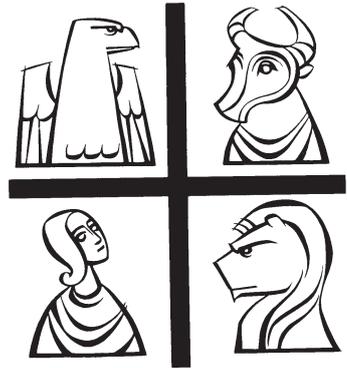
## Gospel of Luke 1: 57–80

### The Birth of John the Baptist

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth,  
and she bore a son.  
58 And her neighbours and relatives heard  
that the Lord had shown great mercy to her,  
and they rejoiced with her.  
59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child.  
And they would have called him Zechariah after his father,  
60 but his mother answered,  
'No; he shall be called John.'  
61 And they said to her,  
'None of your relatives is called by this name.'  
62 And they made signs to his father,  
inquiring what he wanted him to be called.  
63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote,  
'His name is John.'  
And they all wondered.  
64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed,  
and he spoke, blessing God.  
65 And fear came on all their neighbours.  
And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea,  
66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts,  
saying, 'What then will this child be?'  
For the hand of the Lord was with him.

### Zechariah's Prophecy

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,  
68 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
71 that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us  
74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.



76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.’  
80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit,  
and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

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## Reflection

The crowd is often fickle in Luke’s Gospel. They begin by rejoicing with Elizabeth but then put pressure on her about the name of the child. Because she does not give the expected answer they turn to her husband who has been struck deaf and mute. Then the neighbours are struck with fear as they recognise that God is at work among them. Zechariah can speak again because he is faithful to God’s promise and the first thing he does is to bless God.

- In his song of praise Zechariah explains how God is at work through the birth of John the Baptist.
  - Where have you experienced the tender mercy of God?
  - How might you be a light that brings comfort to those who sit in darkness?

## Prayer

Amen.