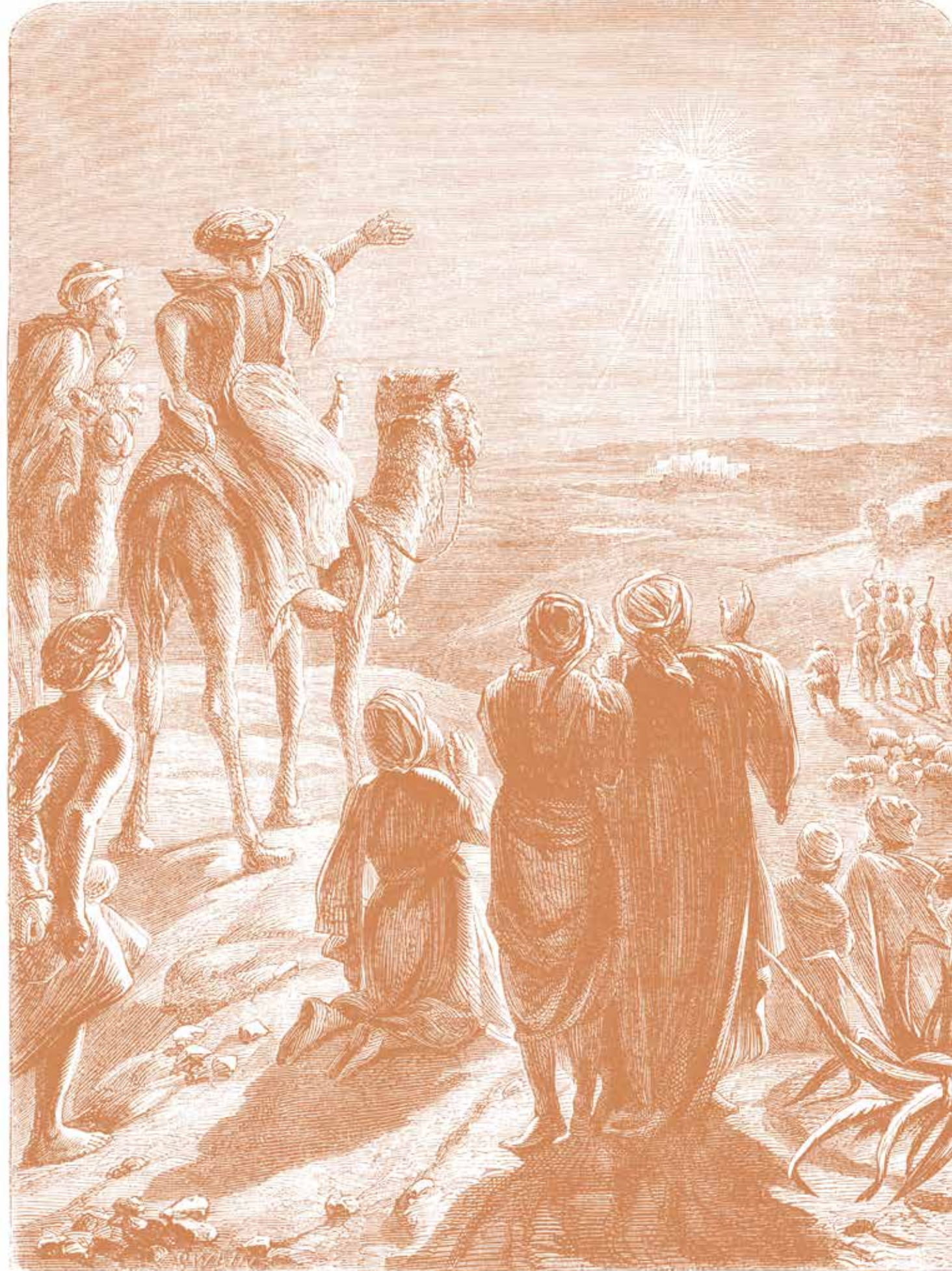


2022 ADVENT GUIDE

THE STORY



Park Cities
BAPTIST CHURCH



YOU'RE INVITED

to journey to the manger with us as we peek into the lives and hearts of the people present in the story of Christ's birth. Through looking at the struggles, triumphs and prayers of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men, we'll step into their world as they encountered Jesus.

AS YOU READ THROUGH THE STORY, WE INVITE YOU TO:

- Read each day's Scripture and reading every Sunday - Friday.
- Read the prayerful, poetic responses of people within The Story as they take in all that surrounded Christ's coming to earth as a newborn baby.
- Reflect and respond to the readings in your time with God each day.

We hope that you will find yourself in The Story as you pause each day to consider how Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men received and experienced the news and coming of Christ.

Our greatest prayer is that every word of The Story leads you straight to Christ Jesus our Lord. The Story is really all about him - the one who loves you more than you can ever know, and who is our only true source of peace and hope this Christmas and every day of our lives.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM
THE PCBC FAMILY!**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27

CANDLE LIGHTING: HOPE

Mary

Luke 1:45–50

“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.”

CHURCH FAMILY READING

Hope is an expectation for good in the future that enables us to wait patiently and trust thoroughly in the present.

Today, we begin Mary’s story as one of profound blessing – and it is. But for Mary, in her time and place, being told she’s having a baby outside of marriage would not have been entirely good news. Before she encountered the angel sent from God, Mary had a righteous reputation and a bright future ahead of her. The cultural reality of the angel’s announcement meant

Mary’s entire reputation and future could be utterly destroyed in a moment, without her ever having a say in the matter. For Mary to be filled with great and glorious hope in response to the news she received is nothing short of the work of God. Likewise, for Mary to continue to hope in Jesus – even many years later when she would watch him suffer on the cross – is evidence of God’s continued work of grace in her life, and it is hope for God’s continued work of grace in ours.

PRAYER

We light this candle in hope, remembering how you grew within Mary great hope.

Grow that same hope in us this day, we pray, in your name above all other names.



SCAN FOR SERMON RESPONSE GUIDE



ADVENT DAY 2
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

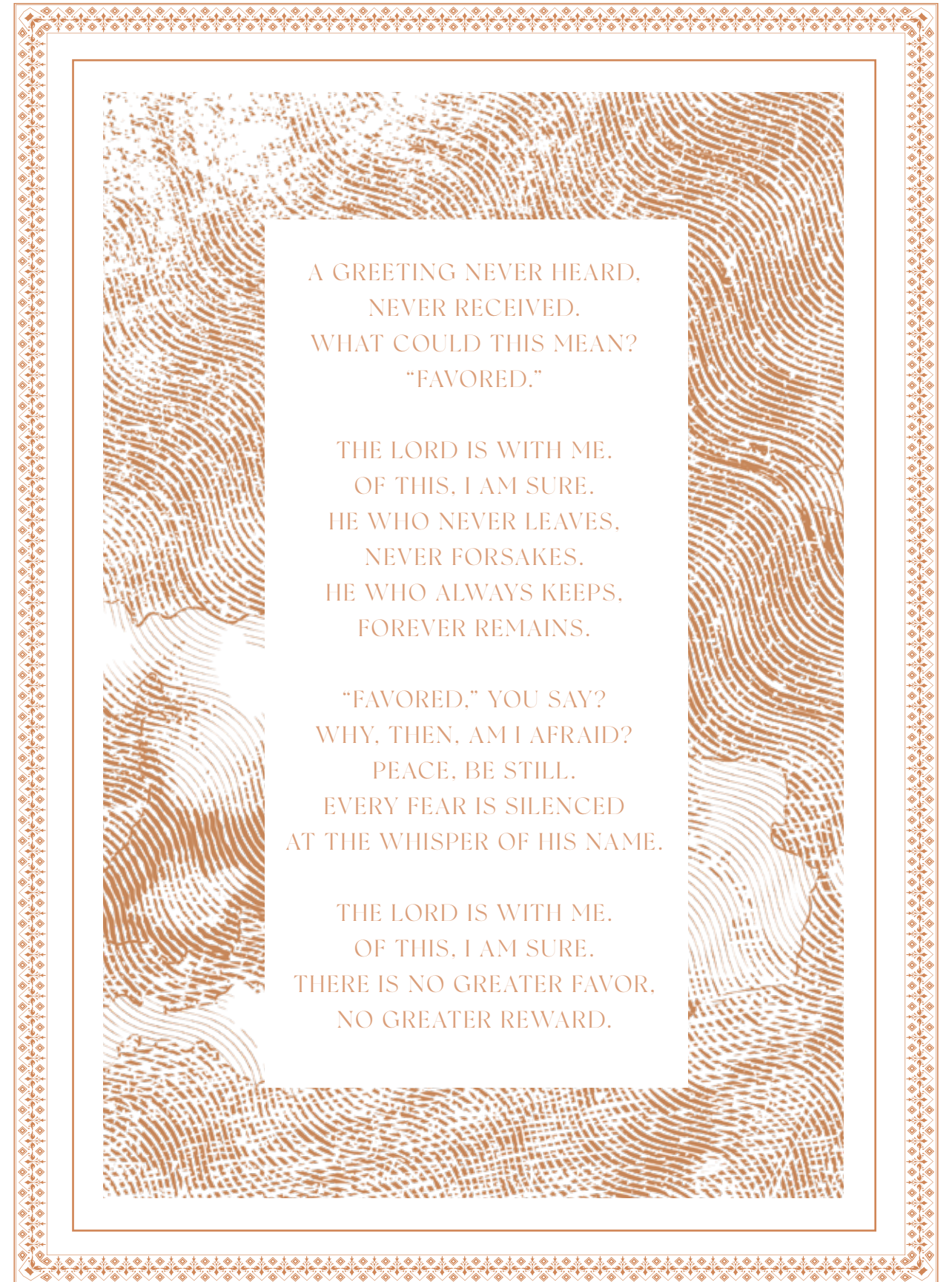
Luke 1:26–30



In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."

The beauty of Christmas is that God came to us in human form. Jesus is called Immanuel, which means, "God with us." Before heaven came to earth in the form of a baby, an angel came to Mary with a message she never expected, calling her "favored." In case she missed it the first time, he tells Mary a second time she is favored by God.

Mary is favored, not because she is betrothed to Joseph, but because the Lord is with her. The angel is about to announce something that will challenge Mary physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Regardless of how Mary felt coming into this divine encounter, it was crucial that she left knowing God is not only with her; God is for her.



A GREETING NEVER HEARD,
NEVER RECEIVED.
WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?
"FAVORED."

THE LORD IS WITH ME.
OF THIS, I AM SURE.
HE WHO NEVER LEAVES,
NEVER FORSAKES.
HE WHO ALWAYS KEEPS,
FOREVER REMAINS.

"FAVORED," YOU SAY?
WHY, THEN, AM I AFRAID?
PEACE, BE STILL.
EVERY FEAR IS SILENCED
AT THE WHISPER OF HIS NAME.

THE LORD IS WITH ME.
OF THIS, I AM SURE.
THERE IS NO GREATER FAVOR,
NO GREATER REWARD.



ADVENT DAY 3
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29
Luke 1:31-34



“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

Mary never asked, “Why?” Mary only asked, “How?” The timeline of these events is certainly not one Mary would have chosen for herself. After all, she was a righteous, God-fearing young woman who was not yet married. Yet, God still chose Mary to raise the Son of God. God knew something about Mary that she did not yet know: he created her for this moment.

Everything in Mary’s life was coming together to fulfill the unique purpose God had in store for her. In that moment, the infallible plan of God probably felt more like an impossible, illogical and fear-filled interruption. Rather than dwelling on how God’s plan derailed her own, Mary focused on something greater. By choosing to focus on the miracle instead of the interruption, Mary’s faith in the one behind the miracle deepened.

A SON.
HOW CAN THIS BE?
I’M NOT READY.
WHAT WILL THEY THINK?

A NAME
ALREADY,
A THRONE
UNENDING,
A KINGDOM
FOREVER
WHAT ABOUT THE WEDDING?

A SON,
BEHOLD HIM.
MY SON,
TO HOLD HIM.

JESUS
WITHIN ME,
MY FEARS ARE SILENCED.
I AM FREE.



ADVENT DAY 4

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Luke 1:35-37



And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Of all the adjectives used to describe newborn babies, “holy” probably wasn’t one of them. “Holy” is a word used to describe the character of God. God is holy and we are not. And yet, holiness and humanity were intricately intertwined in the birth of Jesus. Jesus could have shown up walking and talking as a prestigious person in a position of power. He is God, after all. But that’s not how God chose to reveal Himself to humanity.

God became like us so we might become like Him. God came to live with us so we might live with Him. This entire concept is filled with an air of impossibility, but in the presence of God, impossibility flees and all that remains is faith. Though we were unholy, God makes us holy in Christ. Though we were dead, God makes us alive in Christ.

IMPOSSIBLE.
THE SON OF GOD?
I WOULDN'T DREAM.
NEVER,
NOTHING.

WITH GOD?
I BELIEVE.
ALWAYS,
FOR ALL THINGS.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT.
MOST HIGH, SHOW YOUR POWER.
HIDE ME IN YOUR SHADOW.
COVER ME WITH YOUR WINGS.

HOLY.
HOLY.
HOLY.
THE SON OF GOD.
THE SAVING KING.
I BELIEVE.



ADVENT DAY 5
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1
Luke 1:38

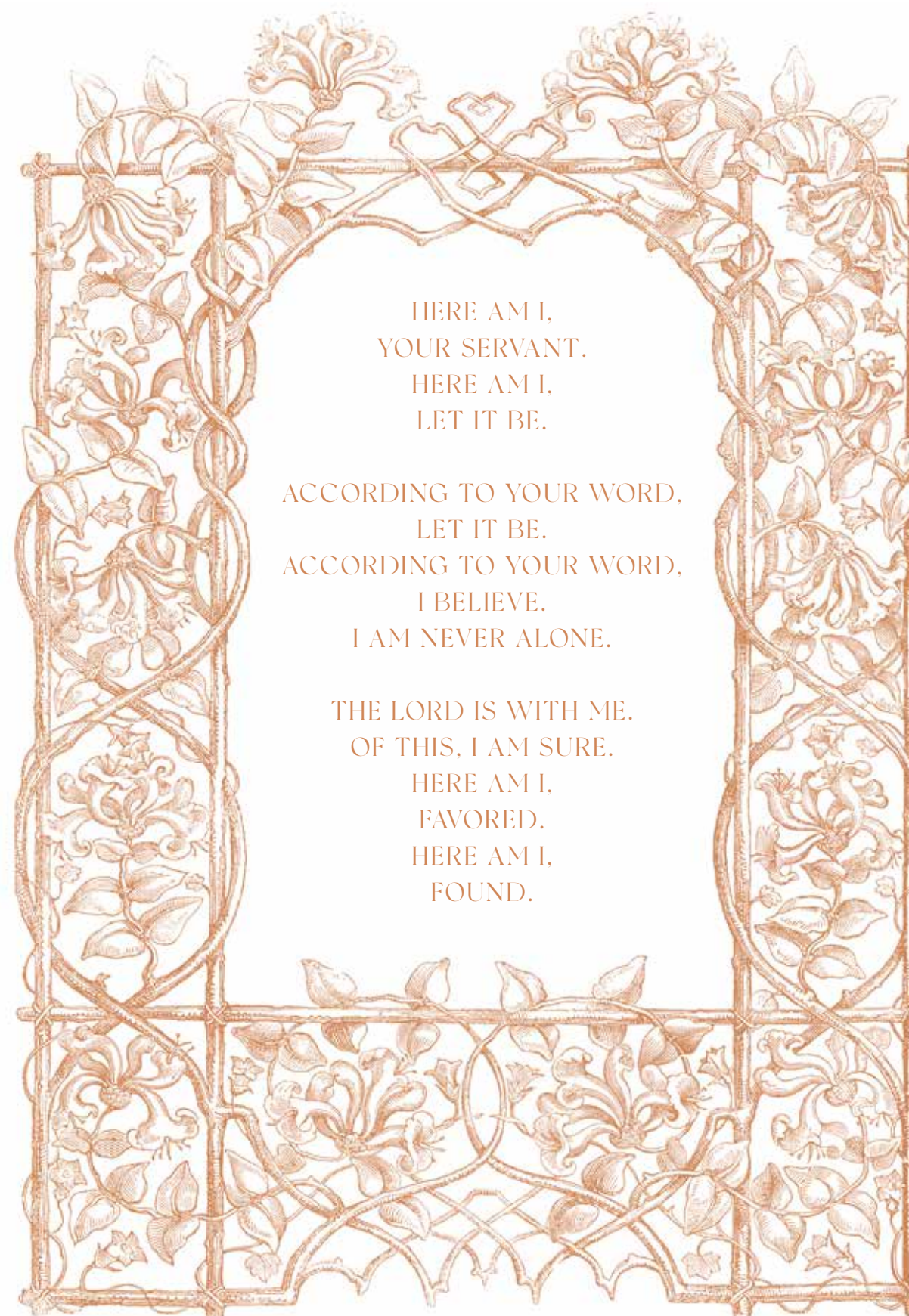


*And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."
And the angel departed from her.*

To *behold* is to pause and look, and often, to marvel. To *marvel* is to be filled with wonder and admiration. The angel invites Mary to behold the miracle of her own pregnancy, as well as the miraculous pregnancy of her cousin, Elizabeth. In response, Mary invites the angel to behold her obedience to the Lord.

Greater than being Joseph's betrothed, and even greater than being Jesus' mother,

Mary is first, foremost, and forevermore God's servant. Mary's ability to identify herself primarily as a servant of the Lord is cause for wonder and admiration. That God would choose us to serve Him in His beautiful story of redemption while knowing who we really are, is nothing short of miraculous. God sees what we cannot. In response, God invites us to behold and believe in Him – our God who sees.



HERE AM I,
YOUR SERVANT.
HERE AM I,
LET IT BE.

ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD,
LET IT BE.
ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD,
I BELIEVE.
I AM NEVER ALONE.

THE LORD IS WITH ME.
OF THIS, I AM SURE.
HERE AM I,
FAVORED.
HERE AM I,
FOUND.



ADVENT DAY 6
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2
John 19:25-27



But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

When the angel greeted Mary and announced the birth of Christ, he never told her how Jesus would die, or when. So often, we unintentionally confine Mary to the Christmas story and we forget Mary was with Jesus at the cross – close enough to have a conversation with Him. As Mary witnesses her Son's journey to the cross, Jesus cries out, "Behold, your son!"

This statement had quite a different meaning than the angel's promise years before. Mary had once been invited to behold the Christ Child whom she would give birth to - but now, she beheld the hope of receiving everlasting life from that same beloved Son, her Lord and Savior.

"WOMAN,
BEHOLD, YOUR SON!"

JESUS.
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU.
IT ALWAYS WILL BE.
SON OF GOD,
I BELIEVE.
HERE WITH US,
CAN'T THEY SEE?

AT YOUR FIRST BREATH,
WE CRIED TOGETHER.
NOW, AT YOUR LAST,
IT'S LIKE NO TIME HAS PASSED.

GO AHEAD, SON.
I TRUST IT'S TIME.
THE LORD IS WITH ME.
OF THIS, I AM SURE.
FREED, FOUND, AND FAVORED,
NOW AND FOREVERMORE.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

CANDLE LIGHTING: PEACE

Joseph

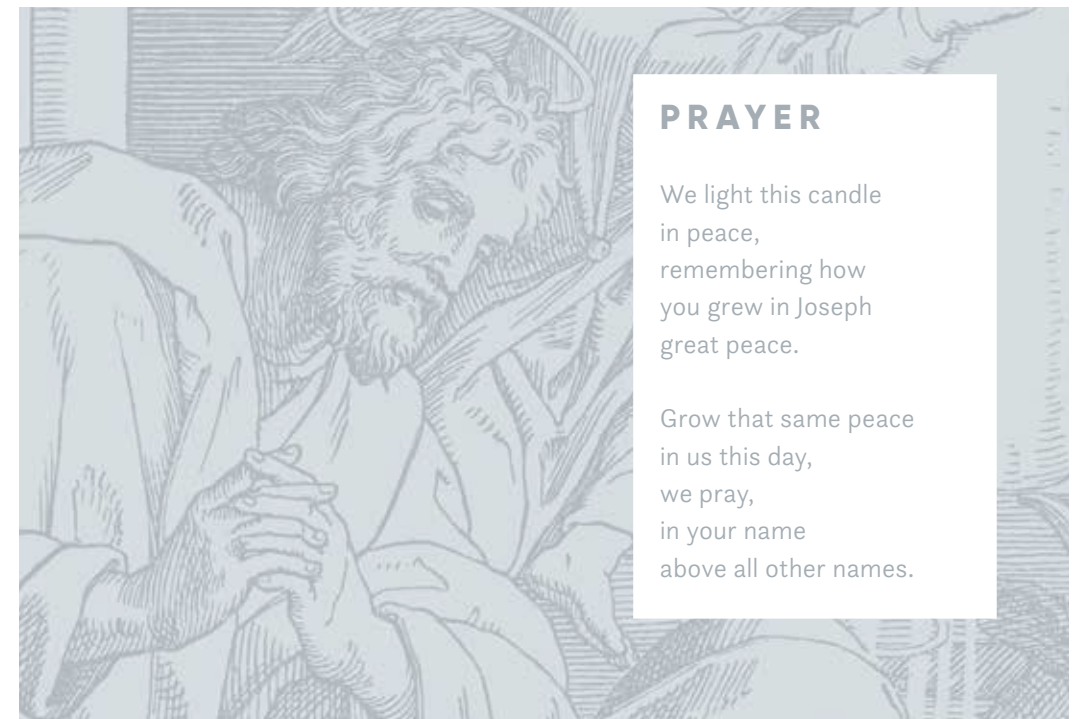
Matthew 1:18–21

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

CHURCH FAMILY READING

Peace is to experience wholeness while we are at rest with others, ourselves, and our situations. When Joseph found out Mary was expecting a child that was not his own, he was not at peace. The Scriptures allow us to see Joseph wrestling with what to do given what he knew. Once Joseph finally laid his head down to rest, God offered him the peace that he needed to face

what must have felt like total chaos. Joseph awoke armed with a new plan of action from God he was ready to obey. As Joseph sought to protect and provide for his God-given family, God continued to supply Joseph with all the peace he needed to make the brave choices God’s perfect plan required. In the same way, God promises to keep in perfect peace all who fix our thoughts on him today, because we trust him.



PRAYER

We light this candle
in peace,
remembering how
you grew in Joseph
great peace.

Grow that same peace
in us this day,
we pray,
in your name
above all other names.



SCAN FOR SERMON RESPONSE GUIDE



ADVENT DAY 9
MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

Matthew 1:18-19



Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

Since the language of “betrothal” is uncommon in our day, we often say, “Mary was promised to be married to Joseph.” Betrothal in that time was not as much a final step of engagement as it was a first step of marriage. Betrothal carried more weight in Joseph’s day than engagement does in ours. In their culture, Joseph had every right to publicly scorn his betrothed, who appeared to have been unfaithful. His decision to divorce Mary without calling attention to

her presumed unfaithfulness was merciful and compassionate. Little did Joseph know that he would soon portray the Way of Jesus before Jesus was even born.

We can perhaps feel that because of our failures and mistakes, Jesus should “quietly excuse us.” Be encouraged that rather than ever separating himself from us, Jesus draws near to us. His mercy and compassion are never-ending.



HOW COULD SHE?
IT CAN'T BE.

MY MARY,
FOUND
WITH CHILD.
NOT BY ME.

DIVORCE HER?
I HAVE TO,
I MUST.
DISGRACE HER?
I CANNOT.

QUIETLY,
I'LL LEAVE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE.
HELP ME UNDERSTAND.



ADVENT DAY 10
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

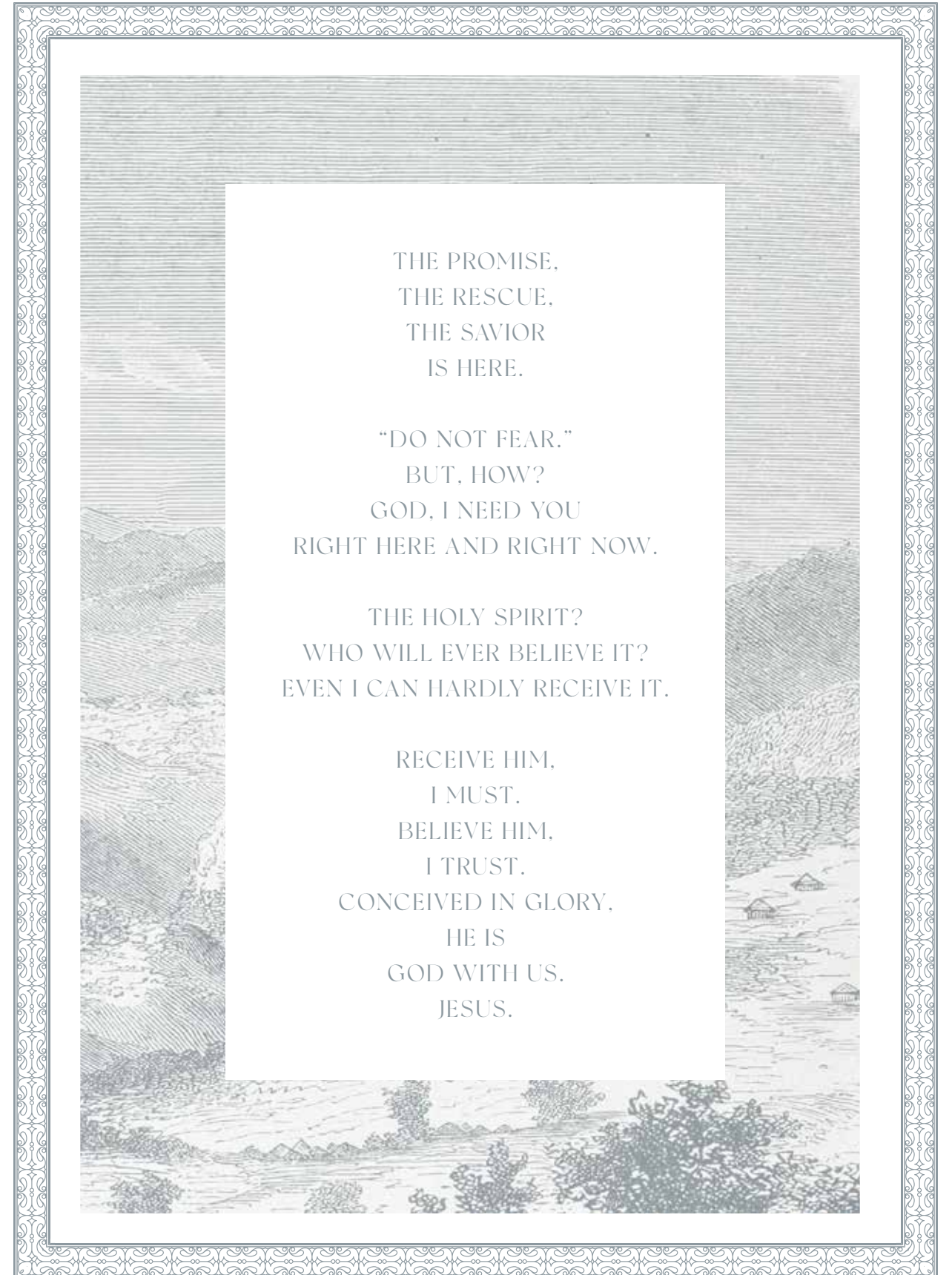
Matthew 1:20-23



But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Divorce was probably not something Joseph ever imagined being part of his story. Though not an easy choice, it seemed the best way for him to honor God and protect Mary. That is, until Joseph went to sleep that night and was greeted by an angel sent from God. "Do not fear" is common for angels to say upon their arrival, but this encounter was different. Joseph was afraid, not because of the angel's appearance, but because of the weight of his circumstances.

God spoke directly into Joseph's anxieties, challenging him to walk in a new way that was fully dependent upon faith. Despite the stigma that would likely come with having Jesus as a part of his family, Joseph needed to believe that the reward of obeying God's call would outweigh the cost. The Story of Jesus offers us, like Joseph, an opportunity to place our trust, obedience, and dependence in his perfect plan for our lives.



THE PROMISE,
THE RESCUE,
THE SAVIOR
IS HERE.

"DO NOT FEAR."
BUT, HOW?
GOD, I NEED YOU
RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW.

THE HOLY SPIRIT?
WHO WILL EVER BELIEVE IT?
EVEN I CAN HARDLY RECEIVE IT.

RECEIVE HIM,
I MUST.
BELIEVE HIM,
I TRUST.
CONCEIVED IN GLORY,
HE IS
GOD WITH US.
JESUS.



ADVENT DAY 11
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7
Matthew 1:24-25



When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Unlike Mary, Joseph did not initially receive the news of Mary's pregnancy from an angel sent from God. When he first received the news, Joseph likely paced back and forth, trying to put the pieces together and determine the best way forward. It wasn't until Joseph took a break from the weight of his circumstances, allowing himself to rest, that God spoke

and redirected his steps. Joseph then immediately begins to work at what God called him to do.

When Joseph rested, God spoke to him. The Way of Jesus is not only one of faith, trust, and obedience, it is a place of peace and rest for us.



WHAT A DREAM!
OR WAS IT
SOMETHING MORE?
NOTHING LIKE THIS
HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE.

JUST BECAUSE IT HASN'T,
DOESN'T MEAN IT ISN'T.
I KNOW WHAT I HEARD.
I KNOW WHAT'S TRUE.
HARD AS IT MAY BE,
I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I DO.
'TIL DEATH DO US PART.
THOUGH I NEVER IMAGINED
THIS AS OUR START.

WOULD YOU LOOK AT HIM?
GOD'S SON
AND OURS.
AND I KNOW JUST THE NAME.



ADVENT DAY 12
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

Matthew 2:13-15



Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

In the book of Exodus, a new king came to power in Egypt who did not know Joseph (son of Jacob), nor the God of Joseph. Seeking to destroy the Israelites living as foreigners in Egypt, this Pharaoh made them slaves. Yet the more the people of God were oppressed, the more they grew in number. Out of his fear and hatred, Pharaoh decreed every baby boy born to the Israelites be put to death. It was in this hostile environment that Moses was born.

Centuries later, another king had come to power in Israel who sought to destroy the newborn Son of God. Jesus was born under the hostile rule of Herod. Again, God spoke to Joseph in a dream, calling him to lead his family to safety by living as foreigners in Egypt, just as the Israelites had done centuries before. Just as he did for Joseph, God not only makes a way - he also guides our steps.



DESTRUCTION IS COMING.
RISE AND FLEE.
KING HEROD IS SEARCHING,
HE WILL NOT CEASE.
GOD WILL MAKE A WAY FOR US.

REMEMBER WHEN
GOD FREED OUR ANCESTORS
FROM OPPRESSION IN EGYPT?
IT'S TIME TO GO BACK.
NOT ENSLAVED,
BUT SURRENDERED.

GOD FREED US THEN,
GOD WILL FREE US NOW.
GOD IS OUR REFUGE.

EVEN HEROD CAN'T STAND
IN THE WAY
OF GOD'S PERFECT PLAN.
RISE AND FLEE.



ADVENT DAY 13
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

Matthew 2:19-23



But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

After Joseph led his family out of Egypt and back to Israel, it was still not a safe space for the Son of God to grow up. Throughout the life of Christ, people were out to destroy him - all the way up until his crucifixion. But Christ rose from the grave, forever victorious over death.

Though Joseph died before seeing God's promise fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus, he believed in the promise.

In Christ Jesus, God sent hope, peace, and assurance of eternal life for all who would place their faith in Him. That is the promise of The Story.



RISE AND RETURN.
WE CAN GO HOME NOW.
IT'S SAFE.
EXCEPT,
WHO'S IN CHARGE NOW?

GOD, I HEAR YOU.
YES, WE'LL FOLLOW YOU.
AS LONG AS YOU LEAD,
WE'LL OBEY.

SO, LEAD US
WHEREVER YOU WILL.
LEAD OUR BOY, JESUS,
I PRAY.

IT SEEMS THERE'S NO SAFE PLACE
FOR HIM ANYWHERE.
GOD, BE OUR FORTRESS.
GOD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

CANDLE LIGHTING: JOY

Shepherds



Luke 2:8-10

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."



CHURCH FAMILY READING

Joy is the delight in something revealed, experienced, or anticipated. In those days, shepherds labored long hours in harsh conditions for little pay.

They were considered outcasts and treated as such. Suddenly, those same outcasts received good news of great joy sent straight from the Most High. As an army of angels surrounded the shepherds in brilliant light, the shepherds were invited to participate in

the most beautiful song, "Glory to God in the highest!" Filled with great joy, the shepherds ran to see the one in whose presence there is fullness of joy. And when it was time to return home to work in the fields, the shepherds continued singing their new song, rejoicing in God. Today, we are invited to rejoice and join in the heavenly song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

PRAYER

We light this candle
in joy,
remembering how
you grew in the shepherds
great joy.

Grow that same joy
in us this day,
we pray,
in your name
above all other names.



SCAN FOR SERMON RESPONSE GUIDE



ADVENT DAY 16
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

Luke 2:8-9

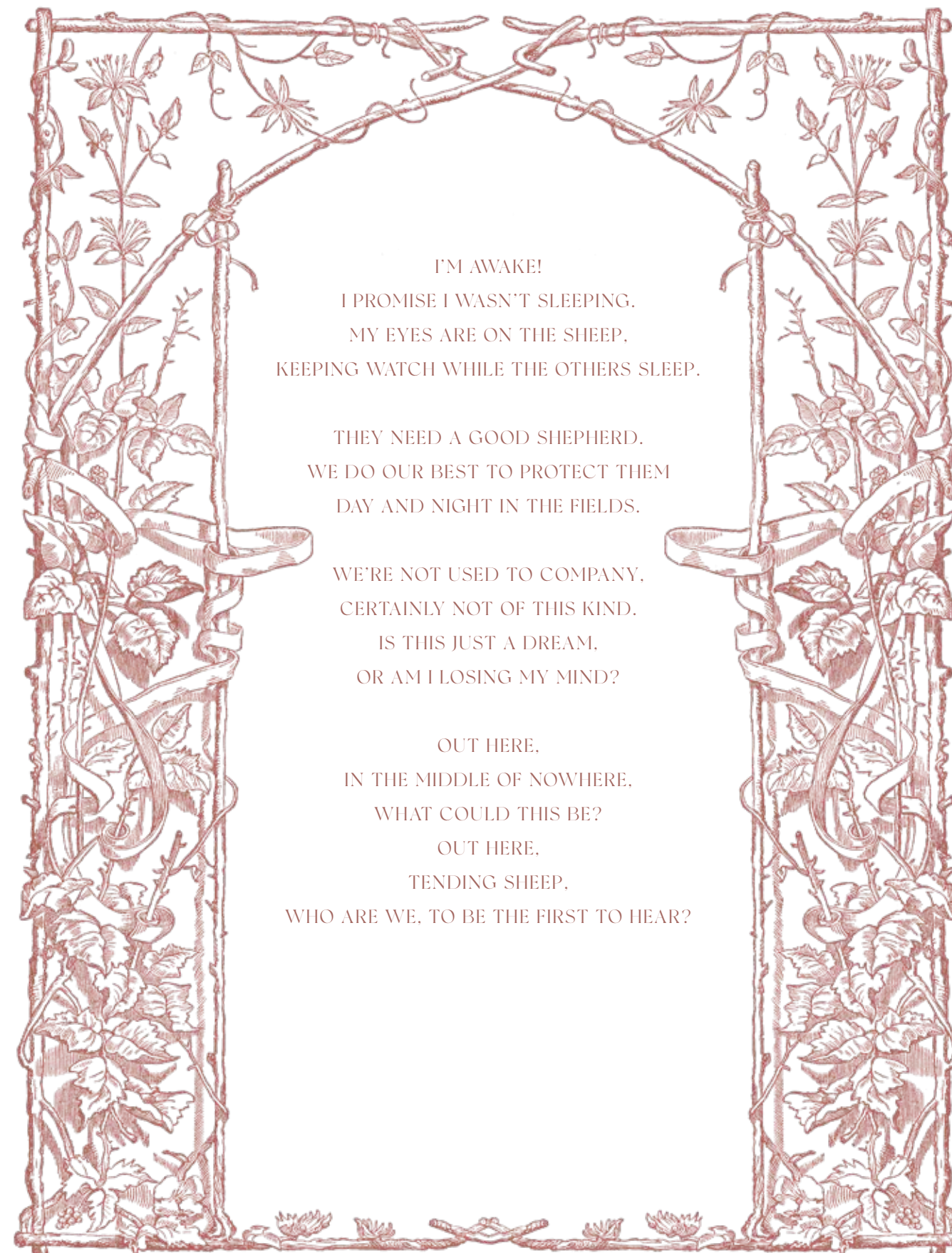


And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

The sudden, bright light of God's glory shining around the shepherds at the angel's coming must have been a stark contrast against the dark night sky in the fields. No wonder they were terrified by the disruption. Prior to the angel's arrival, the shepherds were living normal, everyday lives.

Stuck in our own routine rhythms of life, we often wonder if who we are or what we do

matters. The shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep, but who was keeping watch over them? Only God. Of all the people on the planet, God chose to send his angels to a group of shepherds where they worked and slept - out in a field tending sheep. They were the very first to receive the good news of Christ's birth in Bethlehem! The shepherds mattered to God, and so do we - so much more than we know.



I'M AWAKE!
I PROMISE I WASN'T SLEEPING.
MY EYES ARE ON THE SHEEP,
KEEPING WATCH WHILE THE OTHERS SLEEP.

THEY NEED A GOOD SHEPHERD.
WE DO OUR BEST TO PROTECT THEM
DAY AND NIGHT IN THE FIELDS.

WE'RE NOT USED TO COMPANY,
CERTAINLY NOT OF THIS KIND.
IS THIS JUST A DREAM,
OR AM I LOSING MY MIND?

OUT HERE,
IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE,
WHAT COULD THIS BE?
OUT HERE,
TENDING SHEEP,
WHO ARE WE, TO BE THE FIRST TO HEAR?



ADVENT DAY 17

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Luke 2:10-14



And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

As if one angel’s appearance wasn’t enough, soon a whole host of angels surrounded the shepherds in song, praising God while proclaiming peace on earth. The beautiful, majestic sights and sounds declared near and far that this was a divine moment in history.

It was no accident God chose the shepherds to receive the joyous news of Christ’s birth in the most glorious fashion. They did not

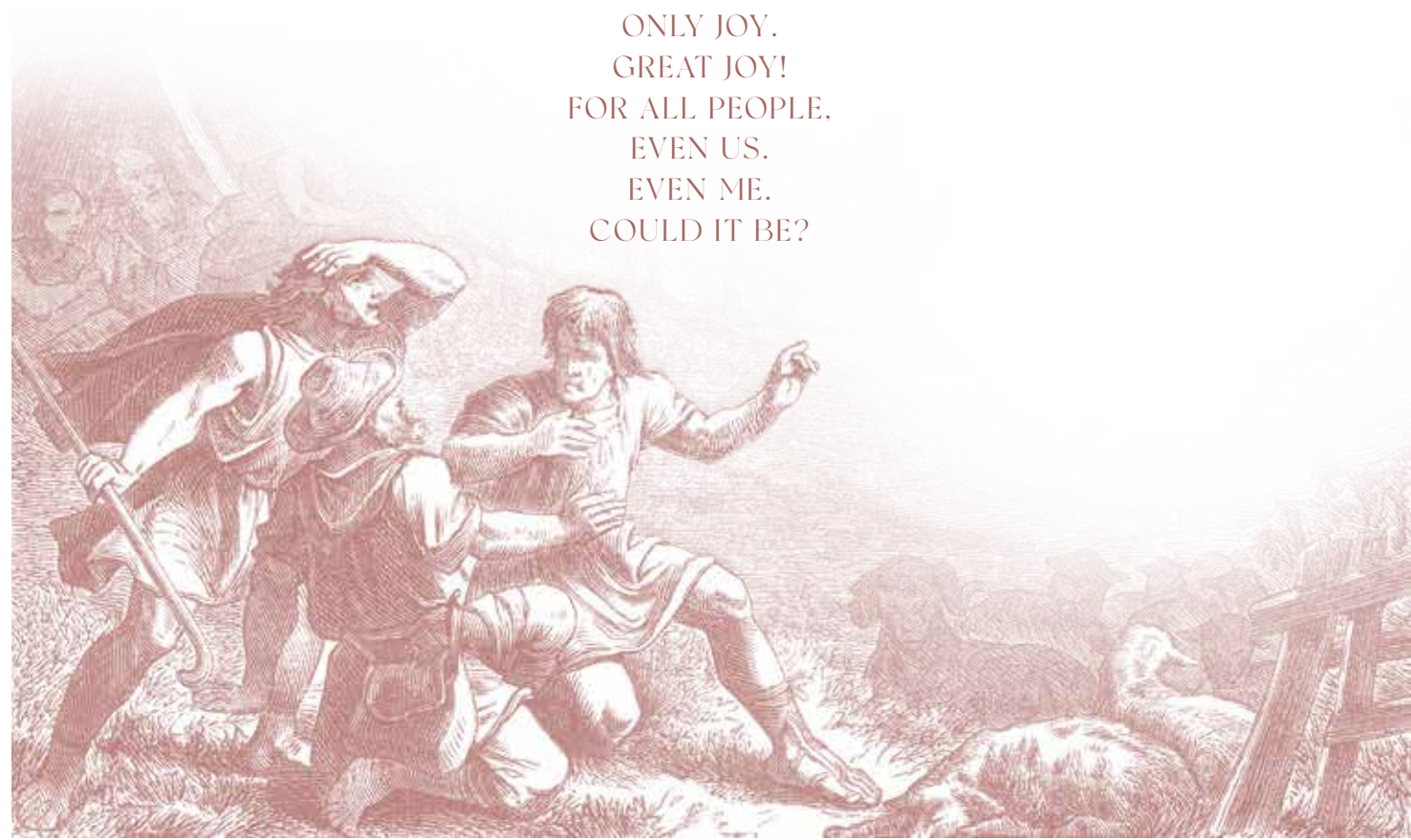
live lives of grandeur. They lived outside with sheep. They were neither royal nor rich. They were not held in high regard by society. The shepherds were often scorned and despised by their neighbors. What had they done to deserve such a magnificent experience of God’s glory? Remember, Jesus is good news of great joy ... for all people. That included the shepherds, and it includes us!

HERE I AM, ASKING,
WHO ARE WE?
WHEN REALLY, I SHOULD BE ASKING,
WHO IS HE?

COULD IT BE?
A SAVIOR,
CHRIST THE LORD.
OUR SAVIOR,
MY LORD.

BORN FOR US THIS DAY,
A BABY.
THERE’S NO ROOM
FOR FEAR ANYMORE.

ONLY JOY.
GREAT JOY!
FOR ALL PEOPLE.
EVEN US.
EVEN ME.
COULD IT BE?





ADVENT DAY 18

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14

Luke 2:15-16



When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Surely, the symphony of God's own army of angels in the night sky was a sight to behold. It would be natural for the shepherds to be stunned, silent, and still as the angels returned to heaven. Instead, they remained focused on what the angel promised they would find in their search for Jesus.

Rather than sitting in the silence of the shadows of God's glory, the shepherds ran straight to the source of light, joy, and glory. Greater than a whole host of angels sent from God is the glory of God himself revealed in Christ Jesus. The angel's invitation for the shepherds to "come and see" extends to all - beyond the distractions and busyness of the season - where there is a Savior waiting to receive us.



TO BETHLEHEM, LET'S GO!
OH, TO KNOW
THE ONE
THE LORD
MADE KNOWN
TO US.

THERE HE IS!
WE FOUND HIM.
WE ARE SHEPHERDS, AFTER ALL.
WE'LL LEAVE THE 99 TO GO AFTER
THE ONE.
ESPECIALLY THIS ONE.
GOD'S ONE AND ONLY SON.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE MADE IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE HERE.
I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BELONG.

BUT SOMEHOW, WE DO.
EVERYTHING IS JUST AS THE ANGEL SAID.
SOMEHOW, IT'S ALL TRUE.





ADVENT DAY 19
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15
Luke 2:17-19



And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Before the coming of Christ to earth, shepherds were considered outsiders. In his birth, the shepherds were invited in as those who are known, valued, and chosen by God. Isn't it kind of God to invite them to come and see Jesus, not in a royal palace, but in a home built for animals? The shepherds would have been so self-conscious in a pristine palace.

that they tended. As they sought and found the promised Lord and Savior, the shepherds discovered that he is not far from any one of them. Nor did they need to clean themselves up to encounter God – and that's precisely how God would have it. God does not desire us to clean up before we come to him; he desires that we come to him first. God sent Jesus to come to earth to save us, make us clean, and give us new life in him.

God brought the good news of Jesus directly to the shepherds in the middle of the field

DO YOU THINK THEY KNOW?
WE MUST TELL THEM
EVERYTHING THE ANGEL TOLD
US.

ABOUT YOUR CHILD,
HE'S NOT JUST A BABY,
BUT A KING.
OUR KING OF GLORY
HAS COME
TO RESCUE US.
JUST WAIT, YOU'LL SEE.

IN THE MEANTIME,
WONDER,
BE AMAZED,
ABSOLUTELY!
BUT REALIZE THAT HE
HAS A PURPOSE – A DESTINY.

AT LAST, HEAVEN HAS COME
TO SET US FREE.
WE BELIEVE.





ADVENT DAY 20
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16
Luke 2:20



*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them.*

As caught up as they must have been meeting the Son of God, the shepherds remembered the angel's promise. The angel brought them good news of great joy, found fully in Jesus. Though personally and directly proclaimed to the shepherds, this good news was never intended to stop with them.

Joining the heavenly chorus, the shepherds were sent to declare good news of great joy that would be for all the people – even outsiders.

We have many opportunities this Christmas season to declare what God has done for us by giving us the gift of his Son, Jesus. Let's joyfully share this good news with our friends, family, and neighbors.



I WISH WE COULD STAY,
BUT WE REALLY MUST GO.
THE WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW!

ALL WE HAVE SEEN,
AND WHAT WE HAVE HEARD.
IT CAN'T BE JUST FOR US,
AND OUR LITTLE HERD.

IT MUST BE FOR OTHERS.
THIS GOOD NEWS,
WE MUST SHARE.
ALONG THE WAY,
WE'LL TELL THEM.
PRAISING GOD,
WE'LL DECLARE:

UNTO US IS BORN A SAVIOR!
CHRIST JESUS,
OUR SAVIOR.
OUR LORD
FOREVERMORE.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

CANDLE LIGHTING: LOVE

Wise Men



Matthew 2:1-2, 11

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

CHURCH FAMILY READING

Love is having such a deep affection for someone that we are willing to lay our lives down for them, seeking their good above our own. The reality of this kind of chosen, committed, sacrificial love is that the good of the one we love becomes our good, too. The wise men lived in a strict world of academic scholarship, constantly searching for meaning behind stars, stories, and science. They collected wisdom and riches for themselves until they met Jesus. At the sight of a baby, these grown men tall

in wisdom and stature fell to the ground and offered this child their greatest treasures. Encountering Jesus, the wise men not only grew in knowledge – they grew in love. It is love that leads us to gladly lavish our very best upon another. After looking in the eyes of the one who made the stars and calls them all by name, the wise men likely never saw their studies – or their own stories – quite the same. In response to God’s great love for us, may we lay our lives down in awe before him, believing he is worthy of all the love we have to give.



PRAYER

We light this candle
in love,
remembering how
you grew in the wise men
great love.

Grow that same love
in us this day,
we pray,
in your name
above all other names.



SCAN FOR SERMON RESPONSE GUIDE



ADVENT DAY 23
MONDAY, DECEMBER 19
Matthew 2:1-2



Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

The Scriptures do not tell us precisely where in the east these wise men are from, but they likely traveled several weeks to find Jesus after seeing the star rise. These men were not religious leaders - they were rigorous learners. They studied history, astronomy, and additional disciplines that deemed them to be called "wise men" in the Scriptures. We can assume they are intelligent, reasonable, respected, and wealthy. While Christmas

carols and greeting cards paint these traveling companions as three crowned kings, the Scriptures do not include those details.

The greater story of the wise men traveling to the manger is not about their intellect or stature in society, nor even about them following the star - it is the story of those from all walks of life who earnestly sought to see Jesus, and found a Savior. That is still The Story!

WE MADE IT!
FINALLY, WE'RE HERE.
IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG JOURNEY
SINCE WE FIRST SAW HIS STAR APPEAR.

WASN'T IT BRILLIANT?
MAJESTIC, I'LL SAY.
IT HAS LED US AS WE TRAVELED
TO THIS DAY.

FOR SO LONG
THE PEOPLE OF GOD
HAVE BEEN WAITING.

WHERE IS THE SON OF GOD?
HE IS THE ONE WE SEEK.
WE HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM.





ADVENT DAY 24
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Matthew 2:3-8



When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."

King Herod lived in a palace he had built upon a man-made mountain a few miles south of Jerusalem that people could see from afar. After these uninvited foreigners arrived to see a king whose star rose higher and shone further than king Herod's towering palace, rumors spread about a "new king" in town. Matthew 2 goes on to reveal that Herod had no intention of worshiping this new king, and every intention of destroying him.

Though the wise men referred to the child as "king of the Jews," Herod knew this town wasn't big enough for both of them. He was

obsessed with this new threat to his reign. After searching in vain to find the newborn baby Jesus, Herod ordered the death of every boy in Bethlehem under the age of two as the solution to his problem. But, God's story was greater.

When confronted by earthly kings who abuse their power, it can appear that evil wins – particularly when innocent people suffer. His Story is still greater! Jesus will triumph with goodness over our fears, concerns, and all injustice.



IT SEEMS OUR JOURNEY
HAS LED US NOT
TO ONE KING, BUT TWO.

BUT THIS KING IS NOT
THE ONE WE SEEK.
EVERY WORD HE SPOKE
SEEMED TERRIBLY UNTRUE.

ASKING US ABOUT THE STAR,
WHEN INSIDE,
HE'S ALREADY AT WAR.
THERE'S A NEW KING
MOST WORTHY
OF WORSHIP.
ISN'T THAT THE NEWS HE ABHORS?

NEVERTHELESS,
WE'RE SO CLOSE.
BETHLEHEM IS NOT FAR.
WE MUST KEEP
FOLLOWING THE STAR.





ADVENT DAY 25

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

Matthew 2:9-10



After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

We know the wise men saw the star rising in the east, but we don't know how long the wise men followed the star. Since Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it is unlikely the star led them to Jerusalem. Perhaps they assumed the new king of the Jews would be born in the epicenter of Judaism. Although they were close, they were still left searching. The wise men couldn't meet Jesus based on their

own understanding. They needed divine assistance to complete their search.

The same is true for us. Our world is packed with advice about how we can find hope, peace, joy, and love. Although we may come close, we will always be left searching, and Christmas can feel empty and disappointing. Only when we admit our need for God's grace will we find the fulfillment of all our searching. It's found in the hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus.



IT STOPPED!
RIGHT HERE.
THE MESSIAH
MUST BE NEAR!

WE, WHO WERE ONCE FAR,
HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR
BY MORE THAN A STAR.
DARE I SAY, GOD?

ALL OUR STUDY
OF STARS IN THE SKY
AND LESSONS FROM HISTORY
LED US TO THIS HOLY NIGHT.

AFTER ALL OUR SEEKING,
WE HAVE FINALLY FOUND.
ALMOST.
WE NEED ONLY TO
OPEN THE DOOR.



ADVENT DAY 26
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

Matthew 2:11



*And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother,
and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures,
they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

Jesus was no longer staying in a home built for animals, but a house built for people. The wise men met the same Jesus the shepherds met earlier, but in a very different environment. God met the shepherds where they were through his angels. He met the wise men where they were through his star. Both were invited to meet Jesus from right where they were.

In the Kingdom of God, it's not about how our journey starts, but how our journey ends. Many of us are mourning this Christmas

season rather than rejoicing, but know that God's great love for us has been shown in Christ. Our journey does not have to end in sorrow - through Jesus, it can end in joy!

John 3:16 tells us that God loved us so much, he gave us his only Son - and if we believe in him we will never need to fear death but delight in living with him forever. Christ has a new beginning waiting for us. We can take hold of it by faith in him today.



LOOK AT HIM!
WHAT WONDER,
WHAT JOY!

FALLING DOWN IN WORSHIP,
WITH MY FACE TO THE GROUND,
I'VE NEVER FELT MORE
IN THE RIGHT PLACE THAN NOW.

LOOKING UP TO BEHOLD HIM,
DEEP IN MY HEART, I KNOW.
WE WERE CREATED
FOR THIS MOMENT.
THAT'S WHY THE STAR SHONE.

WHAT CAN WE GIVE HIM?
GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH.
JUST TO BE IN HIS PRESENCE
IS WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WE KNOW.



ADVENT DAY 27
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23
Matthew 2:12



And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Jesus was born into a kingdom that sought to destroy him before he ever spoke a word. Before Jesus cast out demons with the sound of his voice, before Jesus stilled the winds and the waves with a whisper, before Jesus said, “Little girl, rise,” bringing a dead 12-year-old daughter to life, Jesus survived. An evil king known for his conquests could not overtake this King. No enemy could not stop this King who came to bring life to the fullest.

Greater than the orders of an earthly king was the heavenly warning spoken to the wise men in a dream. They always had the choice to follow both the star and the warning.

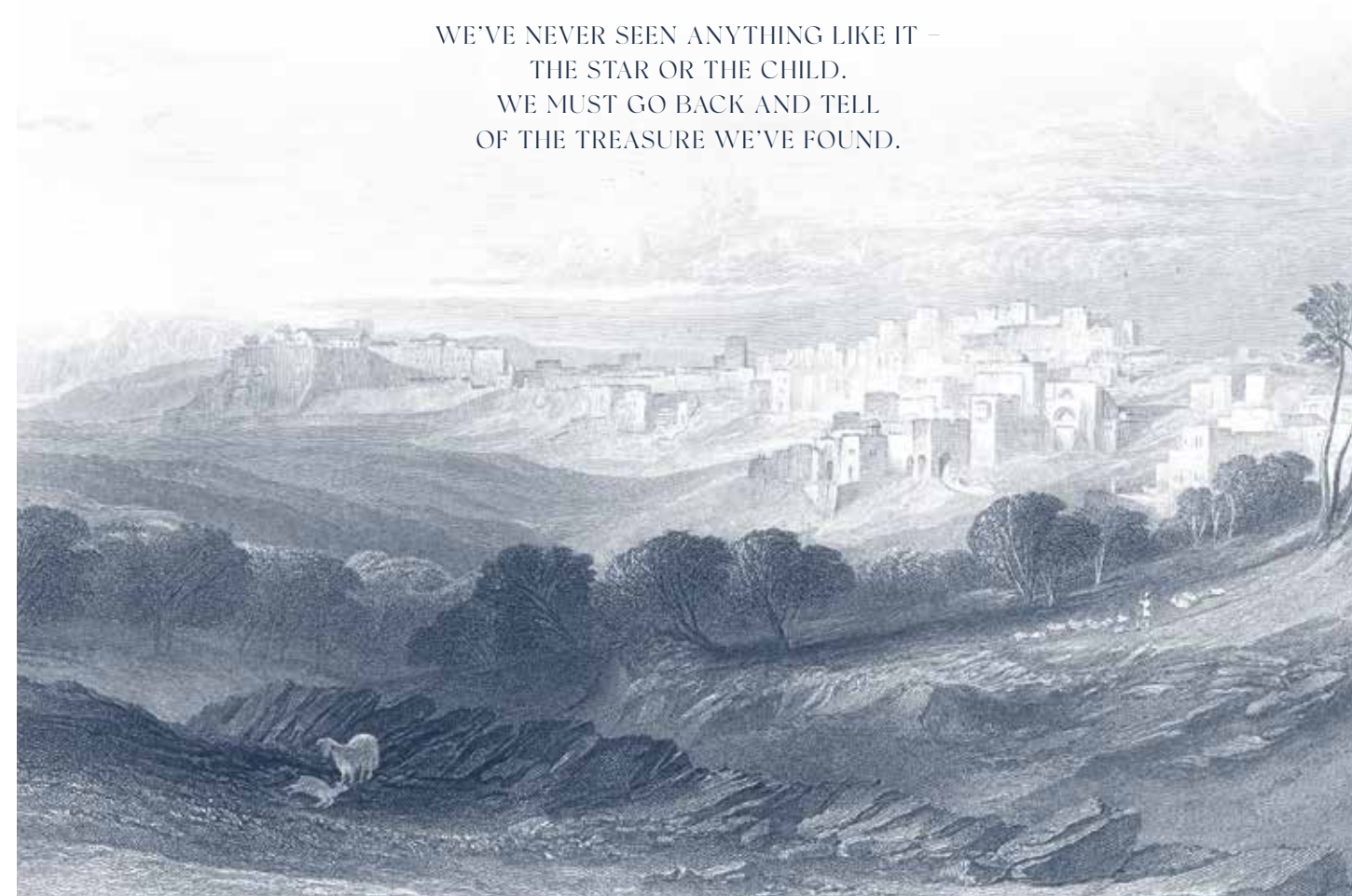
The journey of life takes many twists and turns. The wise men experienced this even in their departure from Bethlehem. Our journey may be similar. May we listen to the voice of God as the wise men did. May we ask for guidance and wait to sense where he is leading. Then, may we rest in his presence along the way.

“RETURN NOT TO HEROD,”
I DREAMT.
AS DID YOU?
EVEN AS WE SLUMBER,
GOD SPEAKS.
EVERY WORD PROVES TRUE.

IT’S TIME WE JOURNEY HOME
A DIFFERENT WAY
THAN WE CAME.
BUT OUR ROUTE IS NOT
SOLELY WHAT HAS CHANGED.

THERE’S NO STOPPING FOR HEROD.
THAT KING CAN’T BE TRUSTED.
QUITE UNLIKE THIS NEW KING
OF GOD’S KINGDOM COMING.

WE’VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT –
THE STAR OR THE CHILD.
WE MUST GO BACK AND TELL
OF THE TREASURE WE’VE FOUND.





SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

CANDLE LIGHTING: CHRIST



John 1:1-5, 9-12, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

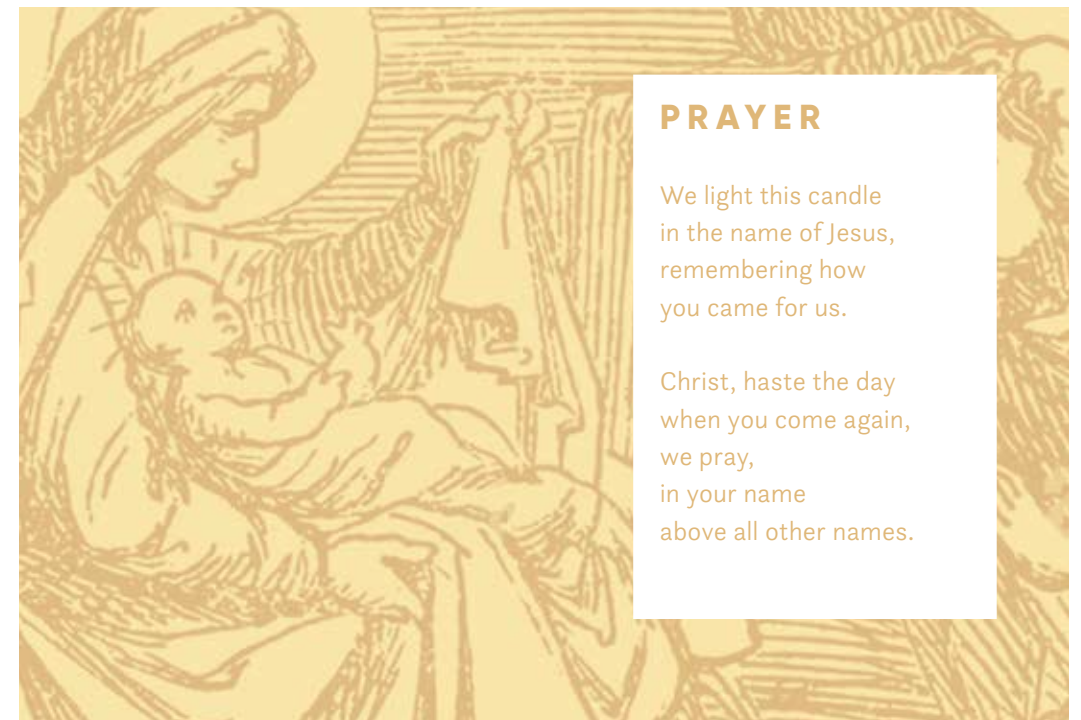
And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.



CHURCH FAMILY READING

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – no one comes to the Father except through him. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. He is the Alpha and Omega, from everlasting to everlasting, the beginning and the end. He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace. He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Bread of Life, and Living Water. He is the Wisdom of God and our Good Shepherd. He is the Lamb of God and the Lion of Judah. He is

the Author and Perfecter of our faith. He is the Joy set before us. He is our Savior, Redeemer, and Friend. He is with us always – even to the end. He is our Home, our Teacher, and our Guide. In him, we can forever abide. He is our Bright Morning Star when we mourn. He is our Refuge and our Calm in the storm. He is our Hope, our Peace, Joy, and Love. He is the I AM, forever and always enough. He is Immanuel, God here with us. He is the Word became flesh and our Lord risen for us. Hallelujah, he is Messiah, most worthy of praise!



PRAYER

We light this candle in the name of Jesus, remembering how you came for us.

Christ, haste the day when you come again, we pray, in your name above all other names.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

WORSHIP WITH PCBC THIS ADVENT SEASON

GREAT HALL ADVENT IN THE ROUND

9:30 AND 11:00 A.M.

ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY

11:00 A.M.

ELLIS CHAPEL ADVENT WORSHIP

9:30 A.M.

ADVENT WORSHIP EN ESPAÑOL

12:30 P.M.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT US AT
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