



READ LUKE 2:8-20

An angel appeared to the shepherds, shining with the glory of God, and the shepherds were afraid. The angel said, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy.” The angel went on to describe where the shepherds could find the newborn baby who would be a savior to the world. Suddenly the one angel was joined by many angels, all praising God’s glory. The shepherds quickly went to find the baby and his parents, Mary and Joseph. They rejoiced and told others about the angels’ message.

REMEMBER – Luke 2:10

“Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people ...”

MORE ABOUT SHEPHERDS

What does it mean to be a shepherd in this story? Shepherds were the outcasts, the lowest of the low, smelly and uncultured and most likely unwelcome at many dinner tables.

With the upheaval continuing in our country, no matter what your political views are it’s likely that you’re angry, disgusted, or frightened by someone at your dinner table this holiday season. How are you handling that?

Meanwhile people around the country have real fears about their safety and their future. People in conflicted areas in the world are struggling to survive. Would the angels tell them, also, to not be afraid? Why?

Do we forget sometimes, in this stressful flurry of meals, gifts and holiday events, that the angels appeared to the shepherds first? Who are the shepherds today? Is there a way we can live shepherd-first lives in the new year? What would change if we, like the angels in this story, sought out the shepherds and showered them with good news? What physical shape should that good news take today? What real hope do we have to share with others?

WONDER

DAY 1: For more than 2,000 years this message of “joy to the world” has been shared. This story has been told and retold, changing the lives of generations of people. And here we are, telling it again. Why? Why does this story resonate so many years later? Does it mean something different to you each year, as you change and grow?

SURPRISE

DAY 2: Is this a story of joy for all people, or just some? Are there exceptions, exclusions or limits? Why, or why not? Can one story really be good news for everyone?

WONDER

DAY 3: What exactly is the good news in this story? Do we celebrate this Christ child because of long-held ideas about heaven and hell? Do we celebrate the birth of this baby because of his impending death? Is this all ultimately about what happens after we die? Or is it about our lives here and now? How do we understand that difference, and how do we live it?

CHARACTER

DAY 4: What is your role in this story? How do you participate in it? How do you bear the image of Jesus in your everyday life?

PRESENCE

DAY 5: What does it mean to live into Christmas joy? How do we go about preparing room in our hearts and lives for Jesus? Imagine that “joy” is an acronym for “Jesus, Others and You.” Starting with the first letter, what would it mean to you to intentionally rediscover the joy of Jesus this year? Does practicing gratitude, or prayer, or journaling, or reading help you rediscover Jesus? If not, what else? Will intentionally rediscovering Jesus this year equip you to bring joy into the world? How?

RELATIONSHIP

DAY 6: How does the joy of “Others” factor into this story? Why are the characters in this story so excited to share it with other people? Is there joy in this community of good news? Does it seem like joy is multiplied when it’s shared? Does it also seem like grief can be more bearable when it’s shared? Why? How does this story of joy speak into your relationships with others?

PROGRESS

DAY 7: How is this story about “You”? Is there a particular joy in your heart this Christmas, or is this celebration simply a cultural habit that you fall into each year? Is there a way to let Christmas change you, and work in you, instead of just becoming a holiday that’s a lot of work?