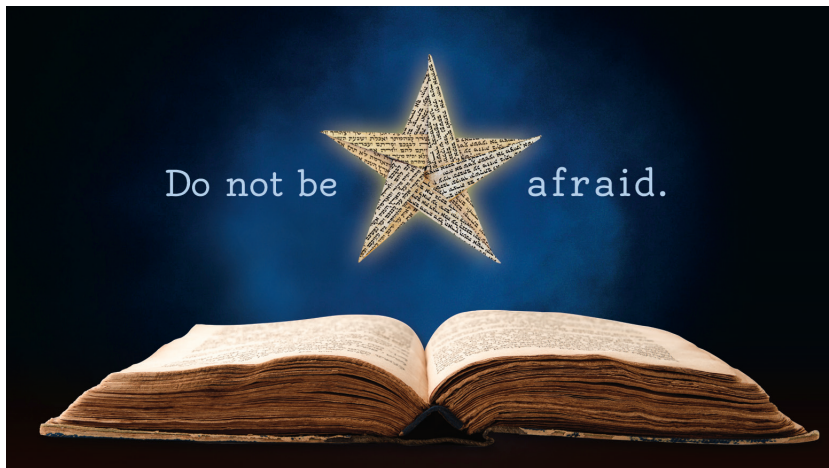




December 21 – 22, 2024

Choose Love
Matthew 2:1-11



MUSIC THIS WEEKEND

CONTEMPORARY
SAT 5:30 pm | SUN 10:30 am

Angels (Glory to God)

The First Noel

Gratitude

Go Tell It On The Mountain

CLASSIC | SUN 8:45 am

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

The First Noel

Gratitude

Go Tell It On The Mountain

MESSAGE: **Sarah Fike**

Communion (Saturday, 5:30 pm)

Baptism: Samuel Matz (Sun 10:30 am)

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Christmas Eve Worship | December 24

Family: 3 & 4:30pm | Evening: 7 & 8:30pm | Online: 4:30 & 8:30pm

Christmas Day Worship | December 25 | 10:00am

Worship in person with Pastor Paul Dean preaching, or experience a re-broadcast of the Christmas Concert online.

Christmas Lessons & Carols | December 29 | 10:00am

This will be the only worship service this weekend!

JOIN US FOR FAMILY MINISTRY

Confirmation Begins! | Wednesday, January 8 | 7:00 pm

Offered for grades 8-12 during StuMin on Wednesdays.

Confirmation date: April 27 at 10:30 am. popmn.org/register

JOIN US FOR MISSION

Mission Outpost open house | January 11-12 after all services

Get a look at what Mission Outpost is doing! Most needed items now are canned pinto beans, raisins, canned pasta sauce, ramen noodles, boxed oatmeal and canned chicken (5oz). Thank you!

JOIN US IN GENEROSITY

Submit statements of intent: popmn.org/fall-stewardship

Submit year-end gifts before 11:59pm on December 31.

Make sure your gifts are credited in this tax year! Info →



Journey through Advent with using our new POP ADVENT CALENDAR: popmn.org/2024-advent-calendar/

Connect With Us

We are here to love God and all people by being the heart, hands and feet of Jesus in the world so that all might know that they are loved. We are an open and affirming church. We value growing a relationship with God and with each other, and showing up for people in need in this community and beyond. **Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church!**



Connect with Prince of Peace! Scan here to join our mailing list and find ways to get involved.



Scan here to donate to Prince of Peace's **Mission & Ministry.**



Scan here to make a **prayer request** or to have a member of the Spiritual Care Team contact you.

PAPER COPIES OF THESE FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CONNECT DESK.



Trust the Story | Do Not Be Afraid | **Choose Love**

WHAT GIFT CAN YOU BRING?

In today's reading, **Matthew 2:1-12**, the magi travel a long distance with very specific gifts:

Gold, a precious metal reserved for royalty, represented kingship.

Frankincense, used in various temple practices, represented priesthood.

Myrrh, which played a part in Egyptian burial rituals, represented death.

The call for us is to bring gifts of our own: our own kingship and our priestly commitments. It's also a call to pick up our cross and follow.

FOR REFLECTION:

- What gift would you bring to Jesus today?
- Why do you think myrrh was chosen as a gift for a baby?
- What does it mean to give Jesus your kingship, or your priestly commitments?
- What does it look like in your life to pick up your cross and follow?
Is that something you usually consider at Christmas time?
- Where do you feel the most love around Christmas?
- How do you feel God's presence in your life during difficult times?

As you venture into Christmas, notice the places where God is taking care of you and spreading love around you.

MATTHEW 2: 13 – 18

We don't often talk about what happens in the verses following today's text: An easily thwarted and manipulative ruler who turns to violence; well-intentioned scholars or seekers first deceived, then enlightened into resistance; a family on the run for their lives seeking sanctuary in a foreign land; the slaughter of innocents.

Merry Christmas, right? But that IS the story. That's the way it was. Does it feel much different now?

We are tempted to turn this into an allegory, and just switch out the names in the Bible for names in our political or cultural discourse today. But the Jesus story is bigger than that. The central theme from today's message is about how all of it – the intrigue, the scheming, the plots, the violence, the power, all of it – is provoked by the promise of God's coming messiah.

FOR REFLECTION:

- Why? Why does Jesus provoke so much unrest? What is so threatening about mercy and grace?
- Does, or would, Jesus provoke that kind of unrest in the world today? Why, or why not?
- Who would be provoked by Jesus today? Governments? Businesses? Communities? Regular people? Would churches be provoked by the "real" Jesus? Why, or why not?
- In the story, God works through the magi, warns in dreams, helps a family flee, and provides sanctuary. Does God do these things today? Is God present in those situations still, or has something changed?
- In her sermon, Pastor Sarah says that "the joy and grace of Christmas is not a gift to be admired, but one to be put to work for the sake of the world God loves so much."
What does it mean to put joy and grace to work? How can you do that in your life?