

same story

REMIX CHRISTMAS

AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

fresh take

goodshepherdkc.com

YOU'RE INVITED TO

Experience Christmas with Good Shepherd

Find a service time that fits your schedule and join us for a celebration filled with music, candlelight, and community. All are welcome—there's a seat for you!

DEC 23 7PM
NORTH OAK

DEC 24 2PM 3:30PM
5PM 6:30PM
NORTH OAK

4PM 11PM
GLADSTONE

**pancakes
and
Pajamas**
A Good Shepherd Family Christmas

10AM - 11:30AM DEC. 13TH
BOTH CAMPUSES



Save the date for Pancakes & Pajamas - A Good Shepherd Family Christmas! Join us on Saturday, December 13, from 10:00 to 11:30 AM at both campuses. Come in your favorite pajamas and bring the kids for a morning filled with the Christmas story, festive songs, crafts, games, and a delicious pancake brunch!

ACCESS OUR ONLINE ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

TEXT 'REMIX' TO 816.370.2900

goodshepherdkc.com

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM GOOD SHEPHERD!

We're so excited for you to begin this special journey toward Christmas! Each week, you'll learn about a different character from the Nativity story and discover how their part in God's plan helps us understand the true meaning of Christmas.

ADVENT KIT INSTRUCTIONS:

Before you get started, go ahead and turn your box into a barn! You'll be adding something new to it each week that connects with the story you read and the activity you do.

Be sure to keep your barn somewhere your family can see it, like on a kitchen counter, table, or shelf. It will serve as a reminder of how God brought all these characters together to welcome Jesus, the Savior of the world.



MARY: REMIXED BY GRACE

Week One - READ: Luke 1:26-38

Mary's story gets remixed the moment an angel appears. Where she thought her life was heading was now changing, showing us how God's grace disrupts and reshapes our expectations with something far better. One moment, she's a young woman from Nazareth, preparing for her life with Joseph. The next, she's chosen to bear the Savior of the world.

In Mary's story from the Gospel of Luke we see God's grace at work, what John Wesley called prevenient grace, the grace that goes before us. Before Mary could fully understand what, God was doing, grace was already moving in her life. God's invitation didn't depend on her status, experience, or worthiness, it depended on her willingness to say yes.

Mary's yes reminds us that God's grace often interrupts our plans not to derail them, but to transform them. The path she walked was not easy—it involved uncertainty, misunderstanding, and risk...but it was filled with God's presence every step of the way. Like Mary, when we surrender our expectations to God's calling, we open ourselves to a story far richer and more redemptive than anything we could have written on our own.

**“Grace
doesn't
derail our
plans—it
transforms
them.”**



MARY'S WORLD AT 14

Most scholars agree Mary was around the age of 14. Being a 14-year-old girl in first-century Mediterranean culture meant living in a world shaped by family, honor, and strict social expectations. Most girls were considered on the brink of womanhood and were often engaged or married soon after reaching puberty, their primary roles centered on managing a household and bearing children. Education for girls was rare outside of wealthy or urban families, and life revolved around domestic duties, religious observance, and obedience to male authority, first a father, then a husband. Daily routines were filled with chores like grinding grain, drawing water, weaving cloth, and preparing meals.



FAMILY ACTIVITY

- Decorate the Mary figure from your advent box.
- Have kids prepare a meal for the family.
- Parents - Talk about what it was like waiting for your children to arrive.

WORD FOCUS

English Word: Grace
Greek Word: χάρις (charis)

Meaning:

- Favor or kindness freely given—not earned.
- A gift that brings joy and transformation.
- God's love that reshapes our lives.

In short, χάρις (charis) is God's generous, loving favor—a gift that transforms and empowers us.

PRAYER:

Gracious God, help me to trust you working in my life through your grace. When Your grace disrupts my plans, give me the courage to say yes—like Mary did—believing that Your way leads to something far better. Amen.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION:

Where might God be remixing your plans with grace today?

JOSEPH: REMIXED BY TRUST

Week Two - READ: Matthew 1:18–25

Advent is a season of waiting, watching, and wondering what God will do next. For Joseph, that waiting came with uncertainty. His engagement to Mary was suddenly overshadowed by confusion and fear. Everything familiar, his plans, his security, his reputation was shaken. And yet, when God spoke through the angel, Joseph responded not with panic, but with trust.

Joseph steps into the unknown, choosing trust over fear. His quiet faithfulness shows us the peace that comes when we surrender control. In that surrender, Joseph finds not weakness but strength—the kind that only comes from trusting God’s grace at work in the midst of the unknown.

As United Methodist, we see this as grace unfolding preventive grace preparing Joseph’s heart to listen, justifying grace giving him courage to act, and sanctifying grace shaping his life through obedience. Joseph’s yes to God becomes part of the story of salvation—the story that continues through us when we choose to trust God in our own uncertain moments.

“Joseph chose mercy over pride and trusted God’s guidance through dreams.”



JOSEPH'S WORLD

Being Joseph in the first-century Mediterranean world meant living in a culture where honor, faith, and family defined everything. A man's reputation rested on righteousness, hard work, and loyalty to community expectations.

Joseph, a carpenter worked hard to provide for his family while living under Roman rule and economic pressure. Yet his strength wasn't in status or wealth it was in obedience and quiet faith. When faced with Mary's unexpected pregnancy, Joseph chose mercy over pride and trusted God's guidance through dreams given to him by God.

In short, being a man like Joseph meant navigating a world of duty, devotion, and social pressure, yet choosing to trust God's voice over society's expectations. His strength wasn't loud or political, it was the quiet, steady courage of a man who walked in faith, even when the path made no sense.

WORD FOCUS

English Word: Trust

Greek Word: πίστις (pistis)

Meaning:

- Faith, trust, or confidence grounded in relationship.
- A steady assurance that God is who God says He is.
- Loyalty and faithfulness expressed through action.

In short, πίστις (pistis) is a confident trust in God's goodness—faith that moves from belief into obedience.

PRAYER:

God of peace, when I face the unknown, help me follow Joseph's example of quiet trust. Calm my fears, still my anxious thoughts, and remind me that Your grace is already making a way. Amen

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION:

Where is God inviting you to trust Him more deeply this Advent season?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

- Decorate the Joseph figure from your advent box.
- Have kids do a household chore they normally don't do.
- Parents - Talk about all the jobs you've had... starting with your first one to present day.

THE SHEPHERDS: REMIXED BY JOY

Week Three - READ: Luke 2:8-20

Out in the quiet fields outside Bethlehem, a group of shepherds kept watch through the night—ordinary, overlooked, working-class people just trying to make it through another shift. But in that quiet night, heaven broke open. The first announcement of Christ's birth didn't come to kings or priests, but to the humble and forgotten.

The angel's message... "good news for all people" which is the heart of the Gospel and the heart of our United Methodist faith. God's grace reaches everyone. There's no one too far, too unworthy, or too late to be part of God's redeeming story. The shepherds remind us that God delights in showing up where we least expect it and inviting us into the wonder of what God's doing.

Like the shepherds, we're called to respond, to move toward what God is doing and then share what we've seen. In the Methodist tradition, grace moves us into action: we experience God's love personally, and then we embody that love publicly. The shepherds didn't just hear the news, they shared it with joyous hearts, glorifying and praising God for what they had witnessed.

Today, may we listen for God's voice breaking into the ordinary places of our lives. And when we hear it, may we run toward it in joy and tell others of the good news that still changes the world.

**“God’s
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reaches
everyone.”**



SHEPHERDS IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Ever wonder what it was like being a night shepherd in first-century Mediterranean culture? It was a humble and difficult life marked by long, cold nights, constant vigilance, and low social status. Shepherds worked on the margins of society, often viewed as poor or untrustworthy, yet they played an essential role in caring for their flocks and protecting them from predators or thieves. Though largely overlooked by others, shepherds held rich spiritual symbolism, representing God's watchful care over God's people, which makes it especially meaningful that the angels first appeared to them to announce Jesus' birth.



FAMILY ACTIVITY

- Decorate the shepherd and angel figures and add cotton balls as the sheep.
- Each family member share one thing from the past week that brought them joy.
- Parents - Share what it was like to receive the news you were going to be parents. Who did you tell first?

WORD FOCUS

English Word: Shepherd

Greek Word: ποιμήν (poimēn)

Meaning:

- One who watches over, protects, and cares for a flock
- Someone who guards with courage, patience, and sacrifice

This word captures both the literal shepherds watching their flocks at night and the spiritual symbolism woven through Scripture — God caring for His people like a shepherd.

PRAYER:

Dear God, thank You for meeting us in the everyday moments of life. Help us to see Your glory in unexpected places and to share the good news of Your love with others. Make us instruments of Your peace and witnesses of Your grace. Amen.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION:

Who might God be calling you to share the joyous news of Jesus?

THE MAGI: REMIXED BY WORSHIP

Week Four - READ: Matthew 2:1-12

When the Magi set out from the East, they didn't have a clear roadmap, only a star. They followed its light with persistence and faith, trusting that it would lead them to something greater. Their journey was long, uncertain, and likely confusing at times, but they kept moving forward. And when they arrived, they didn't find a palace or a throne—they found a child, God made flesh, resting in a humble home.

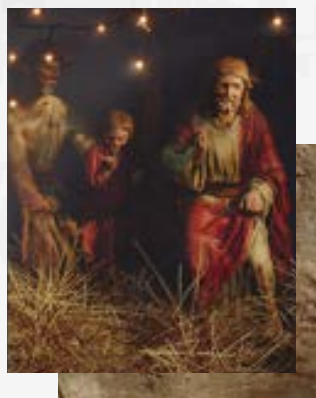
From a United Methodist perspective, the Magi represent the widening of God's grace, that Christ's birth wasn't just for Israel, but for all people. Their journey from afar to worship the newborn Christ symbolizes how God draws all nations to the light of Jesus, fulfilling the prophetic vision of "the nations coming to your light" (Isaiah 60:3).

So, the Magi weren't kings, but Gentile scholars led by divine revelation, whose search for truth led them to the Savior of the world.

This story reminds us that God's grace often meets us in unexpected places. John Wesley called this prevenient grace—the grace that goes before us, drawing us toward Christ even when we don't yet know Him. Like the Magi, we're invited to follow the light of God's grace wherever it leads, trusting that each step brings us closer to Christ's presence.

As we journey through our own seasons of seeking, may we keep our eyes open to the light God places before us—in Scripture, in worship, and in acts of mercy. And when we find Jesus, may we respond as the Magi did—with joy, humility, and the offering of our hearts.

**“They
followed its
light with
persistence
and faith.”**



WHO WERE THE MAGI?

The Magi, sometimes called “wise men” or “kings,” were most likely learned men from the East, possibly Persia (modern-day Iran) or Babylonia, who studied the stars, philosophy, and sacred writings.

In Matthew’s Gospel they appear as Gentile seekers drawn by a mysterious star that they interpreted as signaling the birth of a new king, “the king of the Jews.”



FAMILY ACTIVITY

- Decorate the Magi figures from your advent box.
- The Magi took an unexpected trip to see Jesus. As a family play Coin Flip Road Trip. Start in your driveway and flip a coin at the next intersection to determine whether you turn left or right. Heads turn right; tails turn left. Have fun and see where you end up.
- Parents - Share your experience of attending worship throughout your life. What have you gained from attending worship?

WORD FOCUS

English Word: Magi

Greek Word: Μάγοι (magi)

Meaning:

- Learned men from the East—often called “wise men” or “kings.”
- Students of the stars, philosophy, and sacred writings.
- Seekers of truth who followed signs to encounter God’s presence.

In short, Μάγοι (Magi) were God-seeking scholars whose wisdom and curiosity led them to worship Jesus, reminding us to follow the light of God with reverence and awe.

PRAYER:

Dear God, lead me on the path toward You. When the way is uncertain, help me to trust Your guiding grace. May my life be an offering of worship to Christ, who shines light into every darkness. Amen.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION:

When have you sensed God leading you in an unexpected direction, and in an unexpected way?

same story

FIND LIGHT, COMMUNITY,
AND CONNECTION

This Christmas At Good Shepherd

DEC
23

7PM
NORTH OAK

DEC
24

2PM 3:30PM
5PM 6:30PM
NORTH OAK

4PM 11PM
GLADSTONE



fresh take

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