



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

December 21-27, 2020

## December 24 – Christmas Eve

Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon

Sermon Title: “The Hopes and Fears of All the Years”

## December 27 – First Sunday of Christmas

Sermon by Associate Pastor Stephen Coleman

Sermon Title: “Do You See as Simeon Sees?”

Notes from sermon on 12/20:

Things For Which to Pray This Week:

### Family Focus Question:

Who is your favorite character in the Christmas story and why?

### Questions for Small Groups

1. What do each of the passages this week reveal to you about Jesus?
2. Luke mentions several times in the passage from Luke 2:22-40 that Mary and Joseph are following the Law of Moses with this presentation and purification. Is this important and if so, why?
3. What actions and disciplines do you follow in your life to keep your eyes open to the presence of God?

### Monday, December 21: Read Titus 2:11-14

This week we cross over from awaiting the birth of Christ in Advent to celebrating the presence of Christ at Christmas. Our scripture passages are a mixture of lectionary readings preparing us for Christmas Eve and for the first Sunday of Christmas. As we take this journey, we will be called to move from anticipation (just think of the child-like thrill we get in hearing the words *“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus....”*) to recognition and appreciation, as our passage on Christmas morning will show. Do we recognize and appreciate the gift we have been given in Christ? Today’s passage from Titus, from the Christmas Eve lectionary, helps us embrace both of these mindsets, reminding us of why the gift of Christmas is such...a...big...deal. Salvation for all. Redemption. The ability to resist the earthly and human forces that threaten to drag us down. And hope – always, always, hope.

**Tuesday, December 22: Read Galatians 4:4-7**

As we face a Christmas season unlike any other we've experienced, we may be feeling the loss of time spent with extended family, elderly parents, or the ability to go "home for the holidays." Today's passage reminds us that Christmas itself is the gift of family – our adoption into God's family, where we can call our God "Abba! Father!" as blessed children of God. This was a revolutionary concept to the ancient Jewish people, who never before would have dared to call YHWH "Daddy." As we approach Christmas Eve, let us do so with the joy that we are always, always with family thanks to the gift of Jesus through God's grace.

**Wednesday, December 23: Read Isaiah 9:2-7**

These timeless words that have given us the thrill of hope for millennia can surely transcend the year of 2020. Though it may not yet be obvious, the days are already getting longer, and we can look for the great light that has been pulling us through any darkness we have experienced this year or will face in 2021. Today, let us celebrate the light of Christ, pausing only for a moment to imagine how different life would be without it. How incredible that at the darkest time of the year, we can gather so much joy from a single candle on Christmas Eve; a single passage that reminds us of the Christ child. This light is powerful enough to cut through any darkness we will experience going forward, and this thrill of hope will allow this weary world to rejoice!

**Thursday, December 24: CHRISTMAS EVE: Read Luke 2:1-20**

Tonight, we all gather as a congregation around the Christmas story and celebrate Christ's birth. We won't be crowded into the sanctuary together, but we will be as connected as ever through the Holy Spirit that has breathed life into our congregation and sustains it as the body of Christ. As we read these incredible, timeless words, let us feel one another's presence and love. As we watch the incredible recording of the Christmas Eve service put together by Reveille's tireless and innovative clergy and staff, dedicated musicians, talented youth, and precious children, we will once again be reminded of the omnipresence of God and the resilience of our congregation. We are a church because of Christ – this Christ whom we celebrate tonight. Let us rejoice together: Jesus is born!

**Friday, December 25: CHRISTMAS DAY: Read Luke 2:22-40**

We know the Christmas characters of Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Mary, Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, the Magi, the baby Jesus. Today we focus on two relatively unknown characters who appear at Christmas – Anna and Simeon. Today's story is known as the presentation of the Baby Jesus in the temple. Both Simeon and Anna are advanced in age; both are true saints who have waited to see the salvation of the Lord. Led by the Spirit, they are at the temple when Jesus is presented. Simeon speaks and tells us who this child is. Anna confirms his prophecy. In this story, we see that Jesus and his family are obedient to the law; we learn who Jesus is and the family returns home where Jesus grows in wisdom, strength and favor. Simeon and Anna were able to see Jesus, to see salvation because they were watchful. Jesus does not come just once on Christmas Day but as others have said "he comes again and again and again". As we close out 2020 and move to 2021, we are called to be watchful, as well, to see Jesus and to see salvation in the routine and ordinary of our lives as well as the surprising and miraculous moments of our lives.

**Saturday, December 26: Scripture Memorization: Luke 2:30-32**

"For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

**Sunday, December 27: FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession:** *Merciful God, we confess that we have not lived as your faithful children. We have kept silent in the midst of prejudice and hatred. We have been idle in the face of violence and injustice. We have often denied our better selves, refused to hear your voice or acknowledge your presence. Forgive us, Merciful Lord. Repair our brokenness and restore in us your beautiful grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray, Amen.*