



REVEILLE'S GPS WEEKLY SCRIPTURE GUIDE

Explore scriptures and daily devotionals that reflect on this Sunday's sermon message. Sign up to receive the daily devotional email at www.bit.ly/devotional-rumc.

December 23-29, 2024

Christmas

Christmas Eve Sermon Title: *Voice of the Angels: "Do Not Be Afraid!"*

December 29 Sermon Title: "Stranger Things"

Use the space below to reflect on the questions in this week's devotionals, make class and sermon notes, and write down prayers and concerns.

Questions for families, small groups, and individual reflection:

1. The angel says to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid." The shepherds were fearful in the presence of the glory of the angels. This Christmas, what do you fear? Does the Christmas message have anything to say to those fears?
2. What would your life look like if you were fearless?
3. The angel also says "I bring you good news..." The sermon will speak to the nature of these words. How do you define the "good news" of the Scriptures?
4. We teach our children to beware of strangers, but in our reading for Thursday, the passage in Hebrews tells us not to neglect strangers. How can we be safe and still be faithful to this calling?

Monday, December 23: Read Isaiah 9:2-7

It may not feel like it yet, but the nights are getting shorter. The winter solstice was two days ago, and even with an entire winter ahead of us, we are actually getting more and more sunlight each day. On this special week, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we can begin by celebrating that we are among those who have walked in darkness but have seen a great light. We can celebrate being a Christmas people who recognize the light of Christ that is already among us, giving us the direction, hope, and assurance of brighter things to come. We do not need to be afraid of the dark. Christmas is coming. Christ is here.

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss with loved ones the difference it makes when you know things are going to get better, even when they are hard and scary now. Share a time when this was true for you. Share a way your faith gives you this assurance.*

Tuesday, December 24: CHRISTMAS EVE: Read Luke 2:1-10

Regardless of which Christmas Eve service we attend, we will hear the classic passage in which the voice of the angel says, "Do not be afraid." Christmas Eve reliably gives us this much-needed reminder to put our fears aside and hear the good news that God has in store for the world (and for us). Those of us attending the 7:30 pm and 11:00 pm services will hear a sermon from Pete focused on addressing the common human trait of defaulting to our fears, and how Christmas Eve invites us to call instead upon the God who is Immanuel, God with us. On this day that is too often filled with last-minute shopping, wrapping, cooking, herding cats, and trying to Get Everyone To Church On Time, let us take a few moments to reflect on what our 2025 can look like if we truly heed the voice of the angel and "Be not afraid."

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Create one actionable system you will use in 2025 to remind yourself daily that God is with us and you don't have to be afraid. Write it down.*

Wednesday, December 25: CHRISTMAS DAY: Read Titus 2:11-14

Today is about giving and receiving gifts, and the greatest gift the world has ever received is the gift of Jesus Christ, who came to offer salvation to all people. As today's scripture reminds us, this gift enables us to live in grace when we fall short. It enables us to draw on a force larger than ourselves for guidance, self-control, wisdom, and good choices. This gift means we don't have to live in fear of condemnation for our inevitable shortcomings, but constantly receive redemption and new chances. As we open our gifts today, let us all take time to acknowledge this incredible, perfect, eternal gift and the freedom and power we all are given. We just have to receive it. Merry Christmas!

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Incorporate thanksgiving for Jesus in your celebration of Christmas today.*

Thursday, December 26: SECOND DAY OF CHRISTMAS: Read Hebrews 13:1-8

The exact origin of celebrating "Boxing Day" in the United Kingdom on December 26 is up for debate – whether it stemmed from the early church giving alms to the poor or boxes of gifts given to employees the day after Christmas. Either way, it is based on the principle of showing charity and hospitality to those beyond your immediate family and close friends. In preparation for Stephen Coleman's sermon this Sunday, we turn to this passage from the final chapter in the book of Hebrews that exhorts all of us to show love to all and "not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (verse 2). We will be called to more intentionally and courageously extend ourselves beyond our insular circle to welcome and help the stranger. What needs to change in our beliefs, mindsets, and habits to successfully do this more in 2025?

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss Hebrews 13:2 with your family. What boundaries need to be maintained? Which ones need to be lowered?*

Friday, December 27: THIRD DAY OF CHRISTMAS: Read Luke 14:1, 7-14

Whether we intentionally make New Year's resolutions or not, almost all of us use the week after Christmas to think more intentionally about our goals for the following year. Today's words from Jesus warn us against succumbing to our very human tendency to prioritize spending time with those who can help us achieve our goals and get ahead, rather than recognizing all strangers, colleagues, and friends as equal in God's eyes and therefore deserving our equal respect, honor, and service.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *As we find ourselves making our resolutions, let us keep today's scripture in mind, using it as a plumb line against which we can measure our intentions, priorities, and attitudes.*

Saturday, December 28: FOURTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Hebrews 13:2

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers,
for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Sunday, December 29: FIFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship by praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Almighty and Merciful God, we know that when we offend another, we offend you. We have said unpleasant and hurtful things to others when they failed to live up to our expectations. Grant that we may find that spark of love that ever burns within us, the love that you have shown to us even when we failed you. Fan the embers of that love until it roars again in flames of love, peace and reconciliation. Forgive our sins and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. Lead us into new life through your Son Jesus Christ, Amen.*