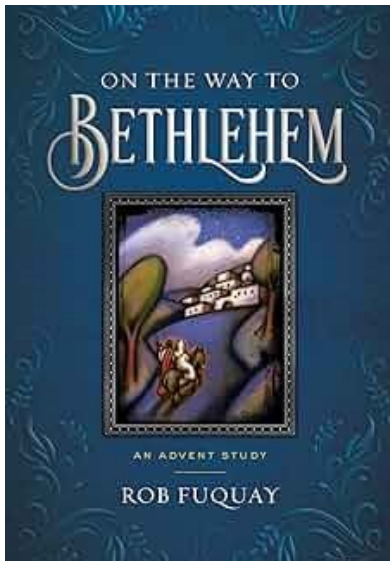




ADVENT

A Season of Preparation



SUNDAY SERMON STUDY SERIES SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

The main focus of Advent is usually centered around the idea of waiting and/or preparing for the birth of Jesus. *ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM* by Rob Fuquay centers around the geographical and historical significance of four locations: Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem. The Adult Ministry Team chose this as the Sunday Sermon Study Series for Advent because it offers a different approach to help us see, experience, and understand both the world in Christ's day and the world we now experience.

Our journey to Christmas begins in Rome, a place of power and the seat of government which affected the lives of people. It was also *a Place of Longing* because Israel longed to be free. We begin our journey by identifying our longings while hoping for new opportunities.

After a thousand-mile journey from Rome to Jerusalem, we find Mary and Joseph in the temple where they are greeted by Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. This couple had been waiting and waiting and waiting for a child, so our second Sunday of Advent finds us in Jerusalem, a *Place of Waiting*. Waiting is different than longing. While we wait, we are not in charge, so the question is what are you waiting for? What is Asbury waiting for?

Our next location is Nazareth. In today's world, Nazareth is a modern city of some 80,000 people. It is a city of Palestinians and Muslims and not open to Jews. It is a city that even tourists find difficult to visit; therefore, it is hard to imagine Nazareth when the angel came to Mary. At that time, it was a very tiny village of less than 100 people! The way to Bethlehem goes through Nazareth—a *Place of Simplicity*—a village where everyone knew one another; a place where one could slow down and learn what was really important. Nazareth shaped Mary and enabled her to say yes to God's calling. What is God calling us to do or to be and are we willing to say yes?

The final location, Bethlehem, Fuquay calls a *Place of Humility*. Today, Bethlehem is a Palestinian city of 25,000, and again, Jews aren't allowed to go to Bethlehem. In Jesus's day, it was a quiet village, a village chosen to carry out the censuses, but more importantly, it was the ancestral home of David. Fuquay talks about Naomi, Boaz, Ruth, and David to trace the link to Jesus. Bethlehem was also the location of the shepherds which in turn pointed to the foreigners, outcasts, the humble, the poor, and the tradition of caring for those in need. So, what is different in your life? What are your needs? How do you recognize God? How do you care for those in need?

During Advent, as we explore the importance of the four locations, may you experience the wonder, awe, mystery, and joy of the season and may the birth of Christ be born anew in each of us!

As always, the book is available in each entryway and is yours to take. (Donations are always appreciated). Please choose an Adult small group and share as we all travel *ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM*! If you have questions or have trouble finding a group, please contact Linda Manning or Pam Thornton.

Adult Small Groups

Participating in the Advent Sunday Sermon Study Series

AGAPE - The word AGAPE means a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. This class welcomes you and encourages you to join them as they seek to understand and reflect the Agape that Jesus had for His Father and for His Followers through study, fellowship, and action. This mixed class meets on Sundays from 9:30-10:25 AM in Room 302-303 on the upper level or via ZOOM. Please contact Pat & Pam Thornton, Kurt Streicher, Phil Paulson or the church office for the link to ZOOM.

GOOD NEIGHBORS - Looking for a women's group that meets during the day? This group is open to anyone who would like to join them on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Chapel at the Masonic Village now called The Vista (2500 Grant Street in Bettendorf). They would be thrilled to have you join them! Contact: Roberta Gimmy

LADIES ARM GROUP - This group of ladies meets every other Thursday from 7:00-9:00 PM via ZOOM. The focus of this caring and sharing group of women is to create an atmosphere where group members affirm and encourage one another. Please contact the leader or the church office for the link to ZOOM. Contact: Sharon Phillips

THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY - This mixed group meets on Thursday Evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM via ZOOM. Please contact the leader or the church office for the ZOOM link. Contact: Sylvia Sorensen

WINGS (Wednesday Inspirational Night (of) Group Study) - WINGS is a group that is open to everyone. They meet at the church in Room 202 on the main level or via ZOOM on Wednesdays from 6:15-7:30 PM. Please contact one of the leaders or the church office for the link to ZOOM. They hope to see a lot of new faces this year as everyone is welcome!
Contact: Jean Black or Heather Dennis

Other Study Opportunities

ASBURY MEN'S GROUP - The men's group meets at 7:45 AM on the first and third Saturday mornings in Nov. and Dec. at the church in Room 302-303 on the second level and via ZOOM. There is always an "open chair" for you to join them as they watch a short video, have group discussion, study the Word and how it relates to everyday life as a Christian man, and enjoy one-on-one prayer partners, fun and fellowship. Contact: Cliff Pim or Phil Paulson

EXPLORATIONS - This mixed class meets on Sundays in Room 202 on the main level from 9:30-10:25 AM. They will continue their study, THE APOCRYPHAL JESUS by Professor David Brakke. Everyone is welcome to join this group at any time!
Contact: Realff Ottesen

Fellowship and Connection Groups

CARD MINISTRY - This group has a lot of fun working together to make handmade greeting cards to send to Asbury members & friends for many special events & holidays. They meet at 6:30 PM on the second Wednesday of each month in Room 302-303 on the upper level of the church. To learn more, visit their Facebook page or contact the leaders.
Contact: Alinda Littrel or Linda Dudgeon

LOOM CRAFTERS - This group is open to anyone who is interested in fun, fellowship and helping to make sleeping mats for the homeless. They meet the second Monday of every month in Connections Café from 6:30-8:00 PM. No skills necessary! Come and join the fun!
Contact: Jean Black or Pam Thornton

CRAFT & CHAT - This group is open to anyone who is interested in crafts. They meet the third Saturday of every month in Connections Café from 9:00 AM-Noon. Bring your own supplies and work on any craft project you like, or come and help make a sleeping mat for those in need! Connect and have fun with fellow crafters. Contact: Michelle Bonney

HANNAH CIRCLE - This is a socially oriented group of ladies that meets at different locations on the second Tuesday of each month either for brunch or lunch. Watch the GOOD NEWS for information or contact Donna Stradt. Join them for fun conversation and fellowship!
Contact: Donna Stradt

L.I.F.T. (LADIES IN FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER) - Details regarding activities, studies, and/or service projects can be found on their Facebook page or by contacting one of the leaders. They do a wide variety of events during the year, so check them out regularly.
Contact: Stephanie Pim, Jenny Bloomquist, Marian Edmund-Paulson, or Julia Hensch

RACHEL CIRCLE - This group of ladies meets at 6:30 PM on the second Tuesday of the month at the church. They support and encourage one another, have a speaker each month, and include a service project which helps support an organization within our community. If you are looking for ways to learn more about community groups that serve a wide variety of needs within our community, then this is the group for you.
Contact: Pam Duehr or Katie Nelson