

NEXT STEPS Series: "The Wonder of It All" Message title: "The Wonder of the Arrival" **12/15/24**

Next Steps are designed to be used in your small group settings. Need a group? Let us help!

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

Luke 2:8-20 NRSV

Today is the third Sunday of the season of Advent. What needs to be checked off the to-do list before Christmas arrives? Are you almost ready? How is your spiritual preparation going?

Today's scripture lesson looks at the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of the shepherds. The shepherds received some amazing news while they were going through their normal day. Notice they were not in a worship service but, after hearing the Good News, they were moved to worship. Have you ever experienced God in a new or very real way while you were going about your daily routine? What happened? Did God bring you news? Did someone show up unexpectedly like the angels did? What was your response? Were you moved to worship?

The news was brought to the shepherds originally by one angel. Notice that before it was all over, a myriad of angels had joined in the celebration. The shepherds went to worship and then reported to others what they had witnessed. It started with a few but the news was then shared with many. Have you kept the Good News to yourself? Are you acting more like you are in the secret service? Are you running out to go tell it on the mountain? How could we (individually / corporately) do a better job of sharing the information about Jesus with others?

How does the joy of the shepherds inspire you to go forward in faith? Remember, they didn't just keep it to themselves. How can you bear witness to God's arrival in your own neighborhood? Your "neighborhood" might be your place of work – like it was for the shepherds. Your neighborhood might be your family. It could actually be those that live near you. Who is in one of those "neighborhoods" and needs to know that *what* or *who* you know?

The season of Advent is such a richer time when it is shared with others on the same journey.

Who deserves to join you on this journey? When will you ask?

Remember, we have gathered in worship; now it is time to go and be the church.

"Living intentionally in a Christlike manner to bring glory to God"

the Church