



SANDIA FELLOWSHIP WEEKLY NEWS

December 18, 2025

The Ironies of Christmas

While waiting in the checkout line yesterday in our local grocery store, I was eavesdropping on the conversation taking place between the cashier and customer in front of me. The cashier was lamenting the behavior of some prior misbehaving and impatient customers. While she scanned my groceries, I offered my cashier a little sympathy and said, "The hurriedness of the Christmas season is no excuse for misbehavior." I told her thanks for her help and encouraged her to have a better day.



I think sometimes there are some ironies in the Christmas season in that through the radio and department/grocery store speakers heralding "Happy Holidays" and "Merry Christmas" that the reality of "happy" and "merry" aren't always complementary to the season. Sometimes a misbehaving shopper or maybe the host of stresses related to busyness of this season drains some of its joy. I hate to admit it, but when I worked in retailing, Christmas became my least favorite season of the year because for nearly all of December, I was rarely at home.

Often Christmas can be difficult because of division, strain or a maybe a loss experienced in a family and it is during this holiday season that the pain becomes magnified. But aren't these the things that Mary and Joseph experienced? Their willingness to say yes to God and take on the task of raising Jesus disrupted the rest of their lives together. Everybody including their relatives in the small town of Nazareth knew that Mary and Joseph had an illegitimate child named Jesus.

Other than Zechariah and Elizabeth, some wise men, a few shepherds and a couple of prophets, who would believe the true story? Those acquaintances were mostly out of the picture, and I would imagine nobody in Nazareth believed that the Messiah was in their midst. Mary and Joseph carried a degree of silent suffering that would only get worse years later for Mary as Simeon's prophetic words "A sword will pierce your soul" would become a reality at Calvary.

Why did they say yes to God's plan for their life and accept this irony of Christmas? I'm not sure, but I think the Apostle Peter gives some insight when an event takes place where everybody abandons Jesus after an awful sermon. Jesus then asks His disciples if they are also going to leave. Peter says, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."* Awesome answer!

Mary and Joseph called him Jesus, but they knew Him as Immanuel meaning "God with us" -- which was the truth that meant more than anything and easily overwhelmed the reality of their irony of Christmas. I believe that we all experience different troubling seasons in our life during Advent, but the question is if the reality of Jesus being "God with us" is what carries us through and overwhelms our ironies of Christmas.

Blessings,
John



BUILDING OUR FUTURE - UPDATE

In the building update provided last Sunday, we indicated that the renovation costs were significantly higher than originally expected. This last Monday the Leadership Team made some immediate decisions to reduce costs. Also, various team members are pursuing some additional cost reductions while other team members are investigating supplemental funding options. To start construction as soon as possible we are pursuing a two-phase option that would allow completion of the worship center and nursery/children's area first and then the fellowship hall area to follow. While we almost have enough funds to complete the entire renovation, it would deplete all our current financial resources of which we are trying to avoid. We are believing that by the time the renovation will be completed we will have the necessary funds in place to meet expenses. However, we are wanting to always do our best to be prepared for less-than-ideal circumstances. Your prayers on this are greatly appreciated.

TALES FROM THE TAXMAN

MATTHEW'S CHRISTMAS STORY



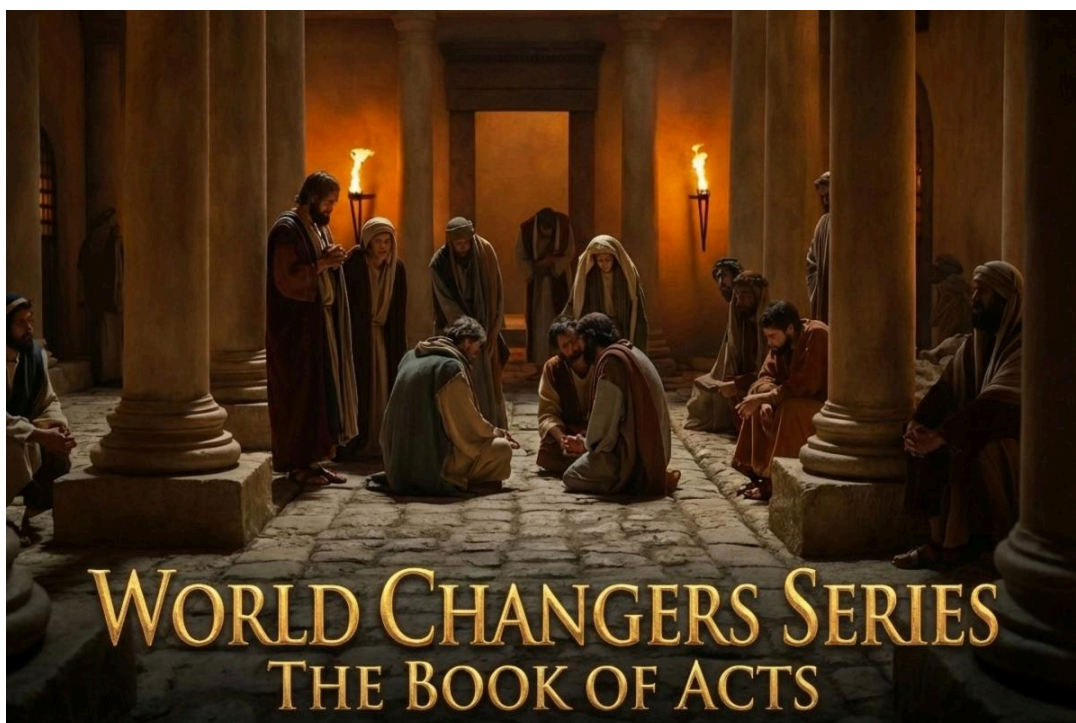
MESSAGE FOR THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21
"When You Follow a Star and You Find A Stable"
Matthew 2:1-12

We are finishing our Christmas Advent series *Tales from the Taxman: Matthew's Christmas Story* where we have been looking at the Christmas story from Matthew's vantage point. This Sunday we will be focusing on Matthew 2:1-12 where we'll take a closer look at the visiting Magi in a message I'm calling, "When You Follow a Star and You Find a Stable."



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Wednesday, Dec. 24 | 4 PM
Ramada Plaza (2020 Menaul Blvd)



WORLD CHANGERS SERIES THE BOOK OF ACTS

WORLD CHANGERS: The Book of Acts

They did the impossible. How in the world could a small band of persecuted believers eventually overcome the dominating Roman Empire and a polytheistic pagan culture with a belief in one Creator God? Christianity's rise in the Roman Empire wasn't a sudden takeover but a gradual transformation, overcoming the Empire through its compelling message, community, and eventual imperial endorsement. It was a result of the power of the Holy Spirit released through these humble and faithful servants who became the World Changers. In this twelve-week series on the Book of Acts beginning January 4, we will discover and be challenged by the amazing characters of this colossal, world-transforming event.



Children's Church

CHILDREN'S CHURCH
Every 1st and 3rd Sunday

We offer Children's Church on the **1st and 3rd Sundays** of each month. This program is for children in kindergarten through 6th grade and takes place during the message portion of the morning service.



WITH SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS

Please lift up the Wolfe family of Sharon, Jeff, and Leigh. Jeff and Leigh's son Ethan passed away following a car accident near El Dorado, Texas. Ethan is Sharon Wolfe's grandson. Services will be held this Saturday, December 20 in Burnet, Texas with graveside to follow in San Angelo, Texas.



A LIFE GROUP RESOLUTION FOR 2026

If there was ever a great time to start involvement in a Life Group and for us to grow in our call to discipleship, then the beginning of a new year is a great time for this. Beginning in 2026, we will have eight Life Groups for anyone to join in and get to know and grow with other members of Sandia Fellowship.

Life Groups are the best way to develop friendships in our church and offer your gifts and graces to be a blessing to others. If you are interested in joining a Life Group, click [here](#) to find a particular Life Group that you would like to participate in. Then, **email us** the name of that Life Group and Holly will put you in contact with the leader of that group. Some groups meet at night, some during the day, and some on weekends.

NEW LIFE GROUP

The Story

GETTING TO
THE HEART
OF GOD'S
STORY



NEW LIFE GROUP: THE STORY

There is a new Life Group starting this January that is based on *The Story* which is an abridged, **chronological Bible** that reads like a novel. For those intimidated or overwhelmed by reading through the entire Bible in a year, this is a great option. *The Story Life Group* will be meeting on the **first and third Monday of each month at noon** at our church office building. We will offer a **Zoom option** if you are unable to travel to meet in person. *The Story* book will need to be purchased in advance of the first meeting that will be on January 5. If you are interested in participating in this class, **PLEASE SIGN UP** by clicking [here](#) today.



THERE'S A LIFE GROUP FOR YOU!

Sandia Fellowship has several LIFE Groups regularly meeting in homes throughout Albuquerque, as well as two that meet in local restaurants:

Tramway Group: This LIFE Group meets every first and third Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 PM. Contact: **Ed Boucheron**

Northeast Group: This LIFE Group meets every first and third Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 PM. Contact: **Tim Ownbey**

Women's Group: This LIFE Group meets every second and fourth Saturday at 10:00 AM at the church offices (2609 Texas St NE). Contact: **Lindy Rech**

Foothills Group: This LIFE Group meets every first and third Tuesday from 2:00-3:00 PM. Contact: **Jim Turner**

“The Story” Group: This LIFE Group meets every first and third Monday from 12:00-1:00 PM at the church offices. Contact: **Pastor John**

“The Chosen” Interactive Bible Study Group: This LIFE Group meets seasonally using an interactive guide that follows along with the popular TV series. The group meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 PM at the church offices (2609 Texas St NE). Contact: **Gina Rivera**

Men's Breakfast: This group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 AM at Sunnyside Up (6909 Menaul Blvd). Contact: **Ed Boucheron**

Women's Breakfast: This group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00 AM at Dave's High Desert Grill (5200 Eubank Blvd). Contact: **Linda Hess**

All of these groups welcome new members! If you're interested in information about any of these, please contact the person listed or send an email to the church **here**.

Visit our **LIFE Groups page** on our website to learn more!



NEED ASSISTANCE WITH HEARING AT CHURCH?

If you are needing assistance with hearing, please download the **Listen Everywhere** app on your cell phone.

When you arrive at our service, please connect to our Wi-Fi.

The password is: **17x9c9s0ua**

On your hearing aid, make sure your Bluetooth is turned on. If you do not want to use the app on your phone, we have two devices available. It has a headphone that goes over your ear and you can adjust the volume on the provided phone. Please ask an usher if you need one of these devices.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

Have you visited our website lately? There's always fresh content being added: [announcements](#) and church news, current [sermons](#) as well as [past sermon series](#), weekly [newsletters](#), and more.

You can also [submit a prayer request](#), learn about our various [Life Groups](#), read about the [missionaries and outreaches](#) we support, set up [online giving](#), learn more about the [mission and vision](#) of Sandia Fellowship as well as the [Global Methodist Church](#), and so much more!

Bookmark our site and check back regularly!

www.sandiagmc.org



SEND US YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS!

Sandia Fellowship has a dedicated Prayer Ministry that intercedes weekly for various needs and requests. The Apostle Paul wrote, "**Do not be anxious about anything**, but in **everything** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **let your requests be made known to God**. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

There is no prayer need "too small" or "too big" for the Lord. If our hearts are burdened by anything, God wants us to bring it to Him in prayer -- and He promises us His peace when we do.

You can submit a prayer request in one of three ways:

- Send a request through our **website** or click the red button below.
- Email us at **prayer@sandiagmc.org**.
- Fill out a **Prayer Request card** available at the Welcome Tables on Sunday mornings.

If you'd like to be a part of this Prayer Ministry, please email Holly at **hklein@sandiagmc.org**.

SUBMIT YOUR PRAYER REQUEST HERE



SANDIA FELLOWSHIP

Global Methodist Church

SHERATON ABQ
UPTOWN
2600 Louisiana Blvd NE

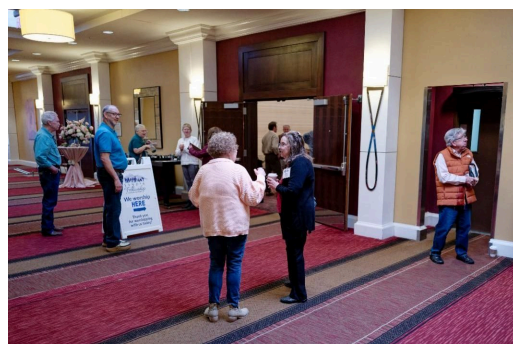
VISIT US ONLINE
www.sandiagmc.org



Sundays @ 10 AM

Join us for worship this Sunday!

Childcare is available for ages six months through five years old.





SANDIA FELLOWSHIP YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Did you know you can subscribe to the Sandia Fellowship YouTube channel? All of our weekly sermons are uploaded to our YouTube channel [here](#) as well as on our [website](#).

Search [@sandiafellowship](#) on YouTube (or just click the photo).



This exciting venture in faith would not be possible without God moving upon the hearts of people to give towards this work. Your generosity helps create a church where we can bear witness to the transforming power of the Gospel. The mission of Sandia Fellowship is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly. We strive to humbly serve others as ambassadors of Christ.

Click [HERE](#) to give safely and securely online.

NOTE: Donations can be made to either the **General Budget** or the **Building Fund** by choosing from the dropdown menu. You can also make a donation to our monthly **Communion Offerings** via the dropdown.

Checks can also be mailed to:

Sandia Fellowship GMC
P.O. Box 16702
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87191



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