

## *“Simply Christmas” Advent Devotions*



### *“Simplicity”*

*“So the shepherds hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.”  
(Luke 2:16)*

The streets of Bethlehem were bustling with people. There was no vacancy in the Inns. People were in a hurry. The town was noisy with the influx of the crowds coming to register for the census. It was here the God of all creation chose to come into our world as a child born of a poor young virgin in a feeding trough for animals. After a chorus of angels proclaimed God’s arrival, a few shepherds hurried from their field to find Mary and Joseph sharing intimate moments with one another and their newborn baby, Jesus. After a hard year, the young couple was at peace. It was if the world had stopped for a brief moment. No crowds. No noise. No hurry. Hope had arrived. They were overwhelmed.

Many in Bethlehem missed the simplicity of the miracle in the manger. The same is true today. The challenge for us this Advent/Christmas Season is to move from hurry to slowing down, from noise to quiet moments of reflection and gratitude, from crowds to intimate moments of solitude with the Savior.

*“And so, with barely a ripple of notice, God stepped into the warm lake of humanity. Without protocol and without pretension. Where you would have expected angels, there were only flies. Where you would have expected heads of state, there were only donkeys, a few haltered cows, a nervous ball of sheep, a tethered camel, and a scurry of curious barn mice. Except for Joseph, there was no one to share Mary’s pain. Or her joy. Yes, there were angels announcing the Savior’s arrival—but only to a band of blue-collar shepherds. And yes, a magnificent star shone in the sky to mark his birthplace—but only a few foreigners bothered to look up and follow it. Thus, in that little town of Bethlehem...that one silent night...the royal birth of God’s Son tiptoed quietly by...as most of the world slept.” (Ken Gire, Moments with the Savior)*

The challenging events of 2020 have given me a deeper appreciation for simplicity in my life. For the next four weeks, we will take a little time each Wednesday morning to spend a few intimate moments with Joseph, Mary and Jesus. This morning, I invite you to find a quiet place, get a cup of tea or coffee and spend a few minutes reading Luke 2:1-20. Allow yourself to hear the Christmas Story all over again, for the very first time. Imagine what it must have been like for Mary, and for Joseph. In the midst of all the commerce surrounding the manger, I look forward to these intimate moments of rediscovering *“Simply Christmas.”*