

Wednesday

Read: **Matthew 2:7-8** *Herod and the magi*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why would Herod care about a baby from some tiny town? Why did he speak to the magi in secret?*
2. *Do you think the magi understood what was in Herod's heart? What else might they have done?*

Prayer Focus Conspiracy theories abound today, God of our hearts. We know how disturbing they can be. We need you to be our source of truth. Help us use you as our guide and guard.

Thursday

Read: **Matthew 2:9-10** *The joy of the star*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Do you think the magi went to Bethlehem because Herod asked them to find the child?*
2. *What joy do you find in the star this season?*

Prayer Focus Like the old song, we wonder as we wander, waiting for another star to light our world. Guide us to you, Star of Bethlehem, and let us be the lamp that carries your light to all we meet.

Friday

Read: **Matthew 2:11-12** *Honoring the child*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *The magi brought gifts to honor Jesus. What gift would you choose to take or give if you'd been there?*
2. *What dream do you have for the safe homecoming of all people this Christmas? Pray for that outcome.*

Prayer Focus The magi thought they were looking for an earthly king, not a poor child. Give us the same chance to see your true nature, Jesus, to offer our best, and to understand the way we are meant to go.

The Gifts of the Gentiles

Pastor's message: **Matthew 1:18-2:12**

Message Notes:

Small Group Format



Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *What one moment spoke most strongly to your heart in this past season of Advent?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

Have someone read: **Matthew 1:18-2:12**

- Discuss observations about the text
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

THE GIFTS OF THE GENTILES **DECEMBER 24, 2023**

Monday

Read: Matthew 1:18-24 *Jesus is born*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why would Joseph have been afraid to take Mary as his wife?*
2. *Joseph could have ignored the angel and walked away, What was the impact of his daring choice?*

Prayer Focus Joseph was a man of many dreams—some of which he must have given up to be a father to Jesus. Thank you, Provider, for the courage and kindness of Joseph.

Tuesday

Read: Matthew 2:1-6 *Herod gets nervous*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why was everyone in Jerusalem troubled with Herod when he learned of Jesus' coming?*
2. *How do you deal with predictions about our world today?*

Prayer Focus We're sometimes fearful at the news of our world, Creator. We wonder what will happen to us. Bring peace to our hearts today. Help us find trust and faith that you are at work. Help us join in that work to heal our world.