

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 15, 2024

Unwrap Your Gifts

Imagine how a parent would feel if their children were given gifts on Christmas Day and laid them aside without attempting to open them or even find out what they were, and just said: "Thank you."

Imagine how the Lord must feel when He has given gifts to us that He intends for us to use (1 Peter 4:10), and yet we never take the trouble to find out what they are, never put them to work, and then excuse ourselves from serving the church by saying that we can't do anything!

Like any gift, it must be unwrapped, examined, and used. It is when we use our gifts the body of Christ is served (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-20). When the body of Christ is served, we are built up spiritually (Ephesians 4:12-16). When we are built up spiritually, Christ is glorified. When Christ is continuously glorified, lives are changed, souls are won to Christ, and Christmas is celebrated all year-long as we worship Him daily (Colossians 3:12-17).

Our service pleases God because it demonstrates our faith in Him (James 2:14-17) and our love for Him (1 John 3:16-20). The greatest gift we can give to God is to use the gift He has given to us to serve others. "For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:8-10). Serving the Lord is one of God's greatest desires for us (Deuteronomy 11:13; Joshua 22:5; 24:21-1 Samuel 12:24).

Let this season remind us of our need to unwrap the gifts that Christ has provided us so that the season serves the reason all year-long. When we unwrap His gifts there is no way we will be disappointed. We will be a blessing, and we will be blessed.



UPCOMING Events

DECEMBER 24, 2024 6:00 PM

THE GIFT OF HOPE

A Christmas Eve Service

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE—12/24 6 PM

Join us for a Christmas Eve service like no other on December 24, 2024 at 6 pm, where the LWFC Drama Ministry and Creative Jams present, "The Gift of HOPE". This amazing service and play will venture into how trials can lead to transformation—how the spirit of Christmas brings us all together. Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and how the Gift of HOPE is available to all of us all year-long.

URBAN MISSIONS TEAM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2024

MEET AT LWFC AT 7:15 AM

URBAN MISSIONS TEAM OUTREACH

DECEMBER 25, 2024—7:15 AM

Join UMT as we go out as a church to serve the unhoused of downtown Houston near Minute Maid Park. Meet at LWFC at 7:15 am to load the buses, to pray, and caravan near Minute Maid Park. We will be distributing Packs of Love and praying with the unhoused. This is a churchwide opportunity to serve for all ages. Dress accordingly for the outside temperatures.

Connection Sundays

2024 December Events

Use Hashtag #LWFCChristmas2024

www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/events

December Connection Sundays

Dec. 15th —Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday

Dec. 22nd—Cookies & Milk for Christmas Sunday & Wear Christmas Colors

Dec. 24th —Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m.

Take Photos & Post With Hashtag #LWFCChristmas2024

LEGACY Youth

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

DECEMBER 22ND 10 AM | DECEMBER 26TH 7:15 AM

PACKS OF LOVE | UMT OUTREACH

LEGACY YOUTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Legacy Youth we need you this Christmas season to help stuff the Packs of Love on Dec. 22nd at 10 am and to serve the unhoused population of Houston on Christmas Day. Register at <https://bit.ly/UMTChristmas2024> and for more information contact **Natividad Smith** at nds_smith@yahoo.com

LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Join the NET TEAM

Help Spread the Gospel of Christ in the Community

Register at <https://bit.ly/LWFCNETTeam>

JOIN THE NET TEAM

Join our NET Evangelism Team that goes out to spread the gospel in the community. We have opportunities for you to serve on the street team that goes out, on the hospitality team that provides refreshments, and the phone team that makes phone calls to spread the good news of Christ. For more information sign up on the events page of the website or contact **Pastor Duane Lawrence or Omari Dawson**.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Announcements
- Communion
- Worship In Giving
- Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses
- Special Music
- "Testimony"
- Luke 2:8-20
- Pastor Duane Lawrence
- Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website
- Call to Discipleship
- Please remain seated at this time
- Visitor's Welcome
- Benediction



Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.

Infants—6th grade

LEGACY

EFFECTING TODAY FOR TOMMORROW

youth ministry of LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP

MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL

2:30 4:00 & TUESDAY NIGHTS

SUNDAY 7:30 PM

Testimony

Luke 2:8-20

I. The shepherds were doing what they had done before – v. 8

In the same country; Living out in the fields; Keeping watch over their flock; By night

- a. Who are these shepherds?
 - 1. Simple men with simple lives; 2. Life of loneliness and labor – danger and poverty;
 - 3. Ceremonially unclean; 4. Spiritual outcasts; 5. Stayed constantly with the sheep;
 - 6. Common, illiterate men; 7. Lowliest members of society
- b. These shepherds who were ceremonially unclean, were responsible for raising sacrificial lambs for the temple in Jerusalem
- c. These shepherds were not respected or included
- d. These shepherds’ names are not known
- e. These shepherds were just doing their job – taking care of the sheep

II. The shepherds’ lives were changed forever – v. 9

- a. The angel of The Lord stood before them
- b. The glory of The Lord shone around them
- c. They were greatly afraid
- d. The shepherds were completely unprepared for what they witnessed

III. Encouraging words from The Angel – v. 10

- a. The very first thing that the angel said to the shepherds was – “Do not be afraid”
- b. Why should the shepherds not be afraid – they were receiving some “good news”
- c. The “good news” was not just for the shepherds but for “all people”

IV. The Message of The Angel – vs. 11-12

- a. For there is born to you – (referring to the shepherds, which also includes you and me)
- b. This day – at this very moment (the night of Jesus’ birth)
- c. In the city of David – Bethlehem, the town where David was born (not the City of David, which was on the southern slope of Mount Zion – II Samuel 5:7-9)
- d. A Savior – destined to die for the sins of the world – yes, your sins and my sins
- e. Who is Christ The Lord
- f. This will be a sign to look for – You will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger

V. The Heavenly Host Praising God – vs. 13-14

- a. A multitude of angels joined the Angel of The Lord – “suddenly there was with the angel”
- b. Glory to God in the highest –
- c. And on earth – peace, goodwill toward men – The Testimony of The Shepherds
- d. The glory of The Lord had not been seen in Israel for 100 years until, in the presence of the shepherds, the glory returned!

VI. The Shepherds Response – vs. 15-20

- a. Let us now go to Bethlehem – no discussion – no debate – no delay – v. 15
- b. To see this thing that has come to pass
- c. Which The Lord has made known to us – notice, the shepherds did not say the angel but The Lord!

THE SHEPHERDS WERE CONVINCED OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE MESSAGE

- d. The shepherds came with haste – v. 16
- e. They found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger – they found the babe just as the Angel of the Lord had said –
- f. When the shepherds had seen Him (Jesus) – v. 17

g. They made known the saying which was told them concerning this Child (Jesus)

THE SHEPHERDS COMMUNICATED THE REALITY OF THE MESSAGE

VII. The people who had heard the testimony of the shepherds were amazed – v. 18

- a. The shepherds were the first to hear of the birth of Jesus
- b. The shepherds response was to worship Jesus
- c. The shepherds were the first to tell the story of the birth of The Savior (Jesus)

VIII. Mary’s Response – v. 19

- a. She kept all these things – made it a matter of private meditation and reflection
- b. She pondered them in her heart – as she had left it up to God before, she will now do the same

IX. The Shepherds returned – v. 20

- a. Glorifying and praising God
- b. For all the things that they had heard and seen
- c. As it was told to them – THE SHEPHERDS CELEBRATED THE REVELATION OF THE MESSAGE

DEVOTED SINGLES MINISTRY PRESENTS

"HOLD OFF ON THE MISTLETOE"

CUFFING SEASON

FINALE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

4:30PM

REGISTER ONLINE AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/4FVLORB](https://bit.ly/4FVLORB)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT RASHAUD HUDSON OR
KERON BROWN AT KERON.BROWN@LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG

LIFE APPLICATION & URBAN MISSIONS TEAM

PACKS of LOVE

ACCEPTING DONATIONS STARTING NOW THROUGH

DECEMBER 22ND

UMT AMBASSADORS WILL BE AVAILABLE

FOR DONATION DROP OFFS AFTER LIFE APPLICATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR DEACON
FAMILY OR NATIVIDAD SMITH FOR MORE DETAILS

PRAYER REQUESTS




Grieving: Patsy Getterson & family, Lucretia Lewis & family, Vicki Wilson & family, Tomitra Wiley & family, Arthur Latham & family, and De'anna Mitchell & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Elvis Anderson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Carolyn Hadnot, Angelique Hudson, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Vivian Phillips, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Beatrice Williams, Jessie Austin, and Evelyn Harvey.

Testimony

The Shepherd's Story

Luke 2:8-20

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