

Friday, December 25: Read [Luke 2:1-40](#)

Luke dedicates forty verses to the details of Jesus' birth and his first month of life in Israel. Notable in his account is the presence of the shepherds as witnesses to the birth of the Savior. Upon confirming the angelic announcement, they leave the manger and spread the word concerning all they had heard and seen. We would do well to follow their example today! Who do you know that's searching for peace and goodwill? You have the answer for their quest in Jesus the Savior. Ask God for grace and courage to go out, speak out, and reach out. Like the angels and the shepherds, we've got a message to give the world.

Friday: Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Saunders** (Bosnia), **Matt and Becky Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezowski** (Wycliffe), **Brad and Christa Babjack** (University of West Virginia), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Central Asia), **William and Salma Garcia** (Tijuana church plant), **Brendan and Ashley Camp** (Columbia)

Week of
December 20
2020



Be the CHURCH is DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual Disciplines Guide:

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

The last two weeks we've surveyed several passages of scripture related to the Bible as the word of God and Jesus as the Son of God. This week, we will pick up with scriptures related to the birth of Jesus, starting with Old Testament prophecies and then going to the various gospel accounts of his nativity.

Monday, December 21: Read [Isaiah 7:13-15, 9:1-9](#)

As we edge up to Christmas, let's start today with several prophecies of Jesus' coming. The two passages in Isaiah famously set the stage for the Savior's birth. [Micah 5:2](#) predicts that Bethlehem will be his "port of entry", and that he would eventually occupy David's throne ([2 Samuel 7:15-16](#)).

Note Messiah's titles in Isaiah 9:6 -- Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father (or, the Father of Eternity) and the Prince of Peace. What is the prophet saying about this son who will be born and how does each of these roles play out in your life today?

Monday: Pray for yourself:

My relationship with God

My life roles and responsibilities

My personal needs/weak areas

My goals and objectives for 2020

Tuesday, December 22: Read [John 1:1-18](#)

In a kind of prologue to his gospel, John introduces Jesus onto the scene as the eternal word. Word or logos in Greek signifies “the all encompassing one, or God. John takes a somewhat vague Greek concept and fills it with personality and meaning. Note he reveals the word was, what he did, and what we receive through his ministry. Note also the contrasts between light and darkness; John and Jesus; children of man and children of God; the flesh and glorious divinity; law and grace. The word who became flesh dwelt (literally tabernacled) among us! Light, life and immortality have come.

Tuesday: Pray for Family by Name.

Wednesday, December 23: Read [Matthew 1-2](#)

Matthew writes his gospel to a Jewish audience, presenting Jesus as the Jewish King, the Son of David. For that reason, he traces Jesus genealogy from Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, through David, the greatest of kings of Israel. He alone includes Joseph’s doubts about Mary’s pregnancy, the visit of the Magi and their flight out of Bethlehem to Egypt until Herod’s death. Note in particular the way God speaks through dreams in Matthew’s account of the nativity. Does he still speak through dreams today?

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church

1. Leadership: Pray for God’s grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David’s ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC. Pray for the church council and the various ministry team leaders. Ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers for the harvest (*Matthew 9:38*)
2. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for more musicians to help lead the church in worship, including a pianist. Pray for the development of a youth praise team.
3. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers. Pray that we incorporate newcomers into our church fellowship. Take some time to pray through this past Sunday’s congregational prayer requests.
4. Discipleship: Ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries at BGCC. Ask God to bless our small group ministry, to raise up new groups, new teachers and more leaders.
5. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ. Ask God to embolden our people to intentionally reach out to others.

6. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God’s clear leading in our future plans as we call our members to a greater love and commitment to the Lord and his service. Ask God to bless our finances so that we can better accomplish his purposes for our congregation.

Thursday, December 24: Read [Luke 1](#)

Luke opens his gospel explaining his objective of writing down an “orderly account” of Jesus’ life. He gives more detail than any other gospel in regards to Jesus’ birth. He also gives numerous references to parallel historic events surrounding the time of Jesus’ coming. Angels play a prominent role in setting the stage for Messiah’s birth. Note also the ministry of the Holy Spirit in [Luke 1-2](#). Mary and Zechariah’s declarations are both inspirational and prophetic. God is coming to Israel’s rescue. Jesus would be their Savior, and ours as well.

Thursday: Pray for “My World”

(Write down names as God brings people to mind.)

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can you invite to church?
- Community -- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County, even through the Coronavirus crisis.
- Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation, especially as churches reunite after the quarantine.
- Pray for the community parachurch ministries serving our county, including Beginnings Care for Life Center, Branch County Right to Life, Celebrate Recovery, Coach Eby Youth and Family Center, Damascus Road Ministry, Family Promise, Forgotten Man Ministries, Foster Closet of Branch County, God’s Choice Church, Jacob’s Well Ministry, Presbyterian Free Health Clinic, Shelterhouse, Tommy’s House, the Gideons and the Bronson Food Pantry.
- America: Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America. Pray that God would use the Coronavirus outbreak to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ. Pray for God’s guidance and protection though this election cycle and up to the end of 2020.