

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There are no graphics on the screen during the sermon.
<b>Other Notes</b>	

## Key Questions

### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the angels and how we hear God's word for us today.

### ***Why is this sermon important?***

It is important because God is still speaking when we listen.

### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This sermon is preached on the fourth Sunday of Advent.

### ***What are the next action steps?***

Take time to listen for God this week.

### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news today is the same as it was on that night long ago - Your savior is born in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.



## Metadata

### **Topic(s)**

1. Grow

### **Sermon Books of the Bible**

1. Luke, Psalm

### **Tags**

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, angels, guidance, God

4th Sunday of Advent  
A Season of Hope - Angels  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1lKHZP7>

December 20, 2015  
Luke 2:10-14  
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,016  
Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1YpJCl>

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## Luke 2:10-14, CEB

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

## Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

### Series Review

This season, we have the opportunity to find renewed hope and joy in the overwhelming love of God with us. Join us for Advent: A Season of Hope as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus once again, experience God's presence with us in Word and Spirit and anticipate Christ's return.

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

### Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## Opening Story - GPS

I love the GPS on my phone. When I am going somewhere I have never been before, the very first thing that I do is see if it is in Maps. Even if I am talking to someone on the phone and they are giving me directions, I am probably on the computer typing their address into Maps and not listening a bit to the directions they are giving me.

### Rerouting

It is amazing, even when you go wrong, it doesn't give up on you.  
It reroutes you. It will go on rerouting you over and over again.  
It says, "When possible, make a U-turn"  
The amazing thing is that it is so patient.

### Back roads in Colorado

Sometimes I think, I know much better, so I just ignore the directions. When we were on vacation in Colorado, we decided to take the scenic route through the mountains instead of the interstate. It kept trying to reroute us for 30 miles, yet I had to keep it on because otherwise I had no idea where I was going

Finally it did reroute to the road we were taking.

It just keeps rerouting me.

What the app doesn't say is this, "Look, you've ignored my instructions so many times, I've had it. I'm going to stop giving instructions."

That is what I would do. It doesn't do that. It is infinitely patient.

Of course, you can ignore the instructions completely. However, if you follow them, most of the time, you will have a much more enjoyable journey.

### Transition

The GPS tells you what you need to know when you need to know it.

Of course, the analogy breaks down, but the shepherds heard what they needed to know, when they needed to know it.

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## First Christmas - Message

### Scripture Text

Listen again to the message from angels:

#### ***"Don't be afraid!"***

Can you imagine an angel showing up in your life? At your job?

Have you ever had it happen where you are in a room totally focused on what you are doing, someone else walks in the room quietly and you look up completely startled? Sometimes when that happens to me, it seems that my heart skips a beat.

***Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people.***

The angels have good news for the shepherds.  
It is news – No one outside of the parents know about this brand new baby.  
It is good – God has come to live as one of us. This is incredible, wonderful, joyous news and not just for the shepherds.  
It is good news for all people. Not just for the shepherds, not just some people - all people.

***Your savior is born today in David's city.***

This is the good news – your savior. Not a savior, not the savior – your savior. Is born today - this is like when the GPS tells you exactly when you need to turn. This hasn't happened in the past, it's not going to come some time in the future. This is happening today – your savior is born today.  
Where? in David's city.

***He is Christ the Lord.***

Who? He is Christ the Lord.

***This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."***

How will we know that it is him? You will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger. I actually think this is a pretty specific description. It is unlikely that there would be many newborn babies lying in a feed trough.

***Transition***

So, this is the message that the shepherds heard, but who do they hear it from? Who is the messenger

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## **First Christmas - Messengers<sup>1</sup>**

### **History of Angels**

"In the early stage, the Christian concept of an angel characterized the angel as a messenger of God. Later came identification of individual angelic messengers: Gabriel, Michael and Raphael. Then, in the space of little more than two centuries (from the 3rd to the 5th) the image of angels took on definite characteristics both in theology and in art.<sup>2</sup>

The early church Father Thomas Rosica says,

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Angel," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Angel&oldid=694850938> (accessed December 18, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Angel," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Angel&oldid=694850938> (accessed December 18, 2015).

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*"Angels are very important, because they provide people with an articulation of the conviction that God is intimately involved in human life."*

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## **Interactions with Angels**

The New Testament includes many interactions and conversations between angels and humans. For instance, three separate cases of angelic interaction deal with the births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

### ***Angel and Zechariah***

In Luke 1:11, an angel appears to Zechariah to inform him that he will have a child despite his old age, thus proclaiming the birth of John the Baptist.

### ***Gabriel and Mary***

In Luke 1:26 the Archangel Gabriel visits the Virgin Mary in the Annunciation to foretell the birth of Jesus Christ.

### ***Adoration of the Shepherds***

Angels then proclaim the birth of Jesus in the Adoration of the shepherds in Luke 2:10.

God spoke in an incredibly powerful way to the shepherds. The message and the messenger made an impact. They heard the voice of God.

So, how, in practice do we hear that voice? How does God guide us?  
God guides us in many different ways.

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## **Messengers Today - Scripture**

So, here's the first – look to scripture. The Bible is God's guidebook for your life.

### ***Psalm 119:105***

The psalmist says,

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*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

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As we read the Bible – and I try to read it every day, because I love to hear God's voice – God speaks about God's love for us, God's kindness, mercy and grace – how important you are to God.

## **Primary Calling – Love God and Neighbor**

It also tells us what God's primary calling is on your life.



God's primary concern is not about what you do, who we marry, whether we get married or not, have a lot of children or none at all, the primary calling in your life is a relationship with God.

That is what gives meaning and purpose to your life – a love relationship with God. Then, a love relationship with other people. This is what we are called to. We are called to love our family, to love our friends and to love our neighbors. There are many different ways in which we can do that.

As we read, we find all the different things you can do – little acts of kindness can make such a difference. Everybody out there is struggling and you can make such a difference. There are so many different ways to love.

### **Become Like Jesus**

God's purpose is that you would become like Jesus – that you will be transformed into his likeness.

It is so important to realize that what matters is not what you do, but who you are. God wants us to become like Jesus. He wants us to be people of integrity and in the Bible you see the kind of things that you need to do to be a person of integrity.

### **Good Things**

God has good things for you to do, or as some translations say, good works. You are not saved by good works, you are saved by grace, St. Paul says. However, you are saved for good works. God has a purpose for your life, good things for you that are uniquely for you to do.

### **Transition**

So, God speaks to us through the Bible.

Another way that God speaks to us is through prayer and the Holy Spirit

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## **Messengers Today - Prayer and Holy Spirit**

### **Recognize and Follow the Spirit**

To be a Christian, is to be led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts. We begin to hear the voice of Jesus, through his Spirit within us. It takes a bit of time to recognize the Spirit of God speaking to us.

### **Example – Phone Conversation**

It's a bit like when someone calls, you don't recognize the number and they strike up a conversation, yet you can't quite remember who they are. So, you start asking questions like, "So, how are things with... everybody." Hoping that they will say, "Oh, Monica's fine." Or give you some kind of clue.

How are you doing with that thing that you do?

When Nicole calls, one syllable and I know her voice.

As you get to know Jesus better, you recognize his voice.

As you pray and read the Bible, the Holy Spirit speaks to you.

### **Desire to Do**

God guides by the Holy Spirit by giving us a strong desire to do things

### **Key Bible Passage – Philipians 2:13**

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*"... God ... works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

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God gives you the desire to do things.  
Sometimes God guides in different ways – visions, pictures, prophecies.  
Sometimes God just gives us impressions to pray for people.  
Sometimes as you pray, something comes to mind.

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### **Conclusion**

Sometimes God speaks through people

### **Good News**

The good news today is the same as it was on that night long ago - Your savior is born in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.

### **Call to Action**

Take time to listen for God this week

### **Invitation**

[Text here]

### **Closing Prayer**

[Text here]

Amen.