

awakenings were just what was needed for both the inventor and the artist to move on in their various endeavors. What complications do you face? What challenges linger on your mind? What problem needs solving? People will sometimes say, "I'll sleep on it." Often with the morning light comes a resolution to the issue we're considering. What do you think? Meditate on these ideas and write your thoughts here. It's Christmas Eve friends! Join us for either our 4:00 p.m. Family Service or our 8:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service concluding with our Candlelight Ceremony.

Thursday, December 25

Merry Christmas! May your plans for today go well for you today, whether you gather with family and friends or have a quiet day to yourself. It has been a long-observed tradition in our family (The Mannschrecks) to read one the birth narratives before we open our gifts to one another. It is a great reminder of the true meaning of Christmas and the greatest gift that our loving Creator has given us. If you find it meaningful you may want to read one of the birth narratives today (Matthew 1:18-25 or Luke 2:1-14. Perhaps you can guide some of your conversation to talk about the three names for Jesus mentioned in the message: Savior, Messiah and Lord. Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas Day!

Friday, December 26

The day after Christmas is often a time when you feel a let-down from all the hustle and bustle. You may want this day to be a Sabbath of sorts, relax and enjoy that down time. How was Our Advent Pilgrimage for you? Meaningful? Surprising? Take some time today to think about this past year and the Season of Advent. Are you where you want to be? Have you done the things you wanted to do these past 12 months? Write some of your thoughts here and pray that God will give you wisdom and energy to move into a New Year with fresh hope. Be blessed and have a Happy New Year!

Message Notes December 21, 2025

*Our Advent Pilgrimage – Destination: Bethlehem and the Second Temple in Jerusalem**

- I. In the membership vows of the U. M. Church, we vow to serve the church through our Prayers, _____, Gifts, Service, and _____ (P-P-G-S-W).
 - A. It's that sharing our faith publicly – our _____ – that is often _____.
 - B. I tell people all the time, witnesses tell what they know to be _____.
 - C. I've said throughout Our Advent Pilgrimage messages that we will have _____ and mentors that come to us from our _____.
 1. Our guides for today are the Angels, _____, Simeon and Anna.
 2. They are the first _____ to the birth of the Christ Child.
- II. We have also spent a lot of time considering the _____ places of our Biblical Guides which makes us consider our own _____ places.
 - A. Thin places are actual places as well as experiences where and when the _____ between the physical and the spiritual world is thin and _____.
 - B. What happened on that _____ Christmas Eve and Day?
 - C. Luke, in his Gospel, often talks about God's interaction with _____ people for _____ purposes.
 - D. The Shepherds were less than _____; they were low-class people because of their _____ made it impossible to follow strict Jewish _____ laws.
 1. That Shepherd's _____ was a thin place as probably was the _____ of Jesus.

*Luke 1:26-38

2. Our third thin place was the _____
_____ a few miles away in Jerusalem.
- III. Pastors and Authors, Henry Brinton and Carl Wilton wrote about the process of _____ as they wrote about to _____ people.
- A. Most of us know the value of delaying a _____
_____ to the following day.
1. We say, "I'll _____ on it."
 2. But just as important as sleeping is _____
_____ — waking up to a _____.
- B. Let's look at the _____ for Jesus and see if we can be awakened to about just _____ this Jesus is.
1. First, he is a _____.
 2. Jesus is also our _____.
 3. Finally, Jesus is our _____.
- C. When we wake up Christmas Day, the _____
for us will be to wake up to the arrival of Jesus, and to see him as God's most _____ and
_____ gifts: _____, _____,
_____.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 22

It was a wonderful thing to receive new members into Central Church this past Sunday! The message began with a discussion of the membership vows related to our activity in our local congregation of the United Methodist Church. Those vows include the words, "As members of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your

presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?" As Pastor Jack mentioned, often the witnessing part of that vow is troublesome. What do you think of when you read or hear the word "witness?" Do you break out in a sweat thinking about being called to share your faith? Do you feel guilty about not sharing your faith? You may love to talk about your faith and share your witness often. Meditate on these questions and thoughts and write your reflections here.

Tuesday, December 23

Read Luke 2:1-14 and verses 2:21-33. In these verses from the second chapter of Luke's Gospel, we meet our guides and mentors for this week: The Angel, Shepherds, Simeon and Anna. The three thin places in these verses are the Shepherd's fields near Bethlehem, Bethlehem itself and the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Our guides are the first witnesses of God's entrance into human history through the Christ Child. The Temple seems like a natural thin place as people gather in the Temple to experience God's presence and even pray for that presence. The open field where the Shepherd kept watch over their flocks and the stable where Jesus was born seem a little less likely to be thin places in which to encounter the divine. Which of the thin places is your favorite? Why? With which guide do you gravitate towards? Why? Contemplate these questions and write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, December 24

Read Luke 2:8-20. Pastor Jack shared some information from an March 18, 2025 article in *The Washington Post* titled, "Does sleeping on an idea work? Here's what science says." The reporter, Meeri Kim, told how Thomas Edison and Salvador Dali would nap with something in their hand that would drop once they fell asleep and their hands relaxed. Both Edison and Dali reported that they would awaken and be more creative and able to address quandaries they were facing before taking a nap. These