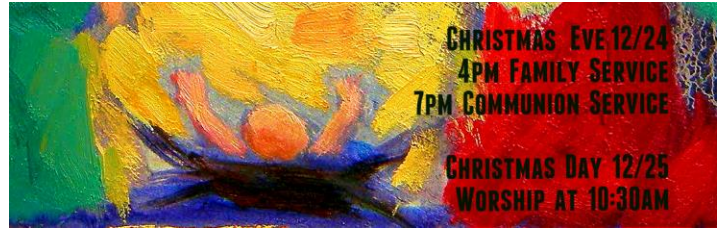




Worship Study Guide

for the week of December 25, 2016



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 25, 2016

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Sermon: *Incarnation*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Philippians 3:1](#), "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you."

- Every year we read the same passages and sing the same carols. It might be hard for some of us to heed the Apostle's admonition.
- We might be bored, afraid, anxious, tired, stressed, sad, spiritually and physically sleepy.
- Nevertheless, in the midst of a dark and broken world and life the New Testament shouts at us to "Rejoice!"; In fact many commentators take this New Testament emphasis to be the same as the Old Testament command of "Hallelujah!"
- Paul feels no embarrassment to repeat himself and he tells us that there is safety in this command for us.
- How does the command to rejoice make us safe?
- Because the command to rejoice is rooted in the eternal and fixed truth that God is for us in Jesus Christ.
- The light shines in the darkness. Those who are in the darkness are not the cause of the light; it bursts in from the outside. That is the work of God. What is the cause of the light?
- So be of good cheer, you who have dwelt in darkness! Rejoice and be glad, you who have sins and shame! For the Mighty God comes to you as a Child. He does not threaten, but takes you upon His shoulders. He carries you home by means of the same cross He shoulders. Today He shares in your birth, so that you can share in His death.
- The Light shines in all your dark places now. Confess your sins and hide in the darkness no more. The light shines, and your gloom is put to flight. To you, to you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. He is your life, your light, and death and darkness have no power over Him. Come and adore Him, come and receive Him, for God became man in Bethlehem, and now gives Himself to you.

Going Deeper in God's Worship

Reflect on the text together. [Hear the sermon here.](#)

- 1.) What is true about God's character, promises or work?
- 2.) What does the Scripture teach you about yourself or others?
- 3.) Are you encouraged to follow Jesus in His mission? How?

Reflect on the whole of Sunday's liturgy together. **Locate this week's [Order of Worship here.](#)**

- 1.) Was there an element of the worship service that you would like to share with the group?

- *A Scripture verse that was read?*
- *A prayer that was prayed?*
- *A song that was sung?*
- *A way that glory was given to God?*
- *A way that someone encouraged you?*

2.) Did the Holy Spirit convict, change, or encourage you in any way you wish to share with the group?

3.) Is Jesus leading you or the group to take a specific risk to minister the Good News to Richmond? Your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your family and friends?

Going Further in Christ's Mission

1.) Have the Scripture text open in front of you as a guide to your prayers.

- Spend time thanking God and giving Him glory.

2.) Ask the Lord for vision, strength and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.

- Count on the work of the Holy Spirit for change.
- Ask for God's forgiveness and grace to repent of sin and trust Jesus.
- Pray for the world, our country, Richmond, and the Church.
- Pray for members of your group, family members, or co-workers, neighbors and friends.

Kevin Greene, 2016