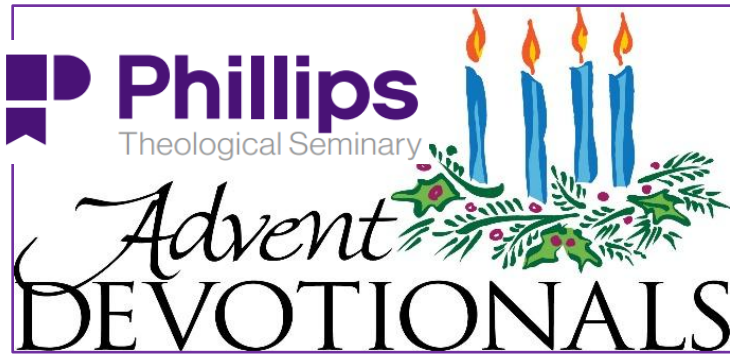


Ponca City Christian

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Seeking, Serving, Sharing
December 22, 2024



ADVENT WEEK THREE: LOVE

DR. WARREN CARTER

←JESUS' CONCEPTION AND BIRTH→

LUKE 1:26-45; 2:9-11

It's Christmas week. Conception leads to birth. Angels are prominent.

Several contrasts mark the angel's announcement to Mary about her pregnancy and the angel's announcement to the shepherds about Jesus' birth. While an angel and shepherds greet Jesus' birth with joy (2:10), that emotion is missing from the conception story. Mary is perplexed not joyful (1:29, 34), submissive not celebratory, meditative not exuberant (1:38).

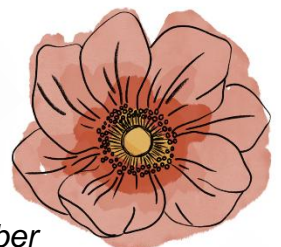
An unplanned pregnancy for an unmarried young woman in a culture where virginity was expected until marriage hardly merits joy. It does not seem like divine favor (1:28, 30). Mary rightly protests in naming the obvious obstacle (1:34). At Jesus' birth, the angel identifies him as "Savior, who is Christ/Messiah, the Lord" (2:11). Talk of a Messiah is missing from the angel's conception announcement. This absence is not surprising since expectations for a Messiah were neither universal nor univocal among first-century Jewish folks.

Rather, in announcing Mary's pregnancy, the angel locates Jesus in relation to God (son or agent) and to David (1:33-34). The angel declares that God has anointed or commissioned Jesus to be the agent of God's purposes. Jesus is presented as another figure entrusted with the tasks that God has committed to David. These tasks include ensuring justice for all, especially for the poor and needy. He is to destroy oppressors, protect against the violent, and ensure peace and food security (Psalm 72). Mary will elaborate these tasks in her Magnificat (1:46-56).

As followers of Jesus committed to living the ways of Jesus, we inherit these tasks. In our frequently broken world, damaged by exploitation, hostility, division, unequal access to resources, and selfishness (to name just a few of our challenges), we inherit these roles. And there is no shortage of opportunities for us to work for the world of justice and good life for all.



The Christmas Eve offering will support our Koats for Kids ministry again this year. You can bring a new coat for school-age children 5-11 years old, or we'll do the shopping if you'd prefer to make a traditional monetary offering. So far this school year, we have given out **112 coats** to children from Garfield, Liberty, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Trout, and the Pre-K Center.



The 2025 flower board is up at FCC. If you'd like to remember or celebrate a loved one, reserve a Sunday in their name. Stop by or call the office for more information.

Service Attendance ~ December 15, 2024

In Person: 62 Live Online: 17
Social Media Hits: 103

Sunday, December 22~ Service Information

Luke 3:7-18

"He proclaimed the good news to the people."

Sunday School @ 9:30 ~ Fellowship Time @ 10:30

Services @ 8:30 & 11:00

Giving in Review

As of November 30, 2024

Income Received YTD	\$262,784.31
Actual Expenses YTD	\$247,466.85
Budgeted Expenses YTD	\$284,349.86

