



### current series

Shepherds with their sheep. Three kings bearing gifts. A new mother, her husband and their tiny baby, resting in a manger as a star shines brightly overhead. We've all seen the nativity scene hundreds of times. But that peaceful scene hides adventure, surprise, hurt and hope. Each of those persons gathered at that manger walked a different road to get there. Join us this Advent season as we learn their journeys to the manger. Each person's story is an invitation for us to consider our own paths. What does your Road to Bethlehem look like?

### today

Even during the Christmas season, many of us feel far from God. Our journey toward Bethlehem looks remarkably like the shepherds. They were born and raised as God's people, but still considered second-class citizens. They were insiders who felt like outsiders. And at Jesus' birth, God left the Temple and appeared among the Shepherds to announce the king of kings could be found not on a throne, but in a manger. The good news for them - and for us - is that God is not found in Temples and Church buildings, but out among us, in our every day lives!

### scripture for further reading

Ezekiel 47:1-12; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 2:8-20; John 7:37-39; Ephesians 2:11-14

### discussion questions

1. Is Christmas a spiritual time of year for you? When during the year do you feel closest to God?
2. Why are the shepherds insiders who feel like outsiders? Can you relate to them?
3. Compare and contrast the Temple and the Church building. Why do we treat the Church building as God's house?
4. Why is it significant that God appeared to the shepherds? What does that mean for us today?
5. Where will you look for God to be active this week outside the church building?

