

Sermon Notes:

The Gospel Never Changes 1 John 4:1-6

Kids, draw a picture of the Angel Gabriel Appearing to Mary

Write your name here: _____



Helping People Follow Jesus

Our Core Values:

Graciousness. Following Jesus is a journey in humility and grace. We want to humbly depend upon God's grace and humbly extend God's grace to others.

Togetherness. Following Jesus is not a solo journey. By following Jesus together, our differences help us follow him better.

Engagement. Following Jesus is a journey of prayerful, intentional community engagement. What matters most is people following Jesus and people learn to follow Jesus through relationships.

Reproducing. Following Jesus is a journey of reproducing gospel communities. We want to see this reproduction happen at every level – from life groups to starting other churches.

Second Sunday of Advent; December 4th, 2016

Welcome to our church. If you have children, please pick up a writing board for them and a bulletin so they can draw during the message (there's an idea on the back of the bulletin for their participation). Our service will be about an hour long. We value being together, so our children stay with us during the service.

If you need to leave the main room with a child, you are welcome to go to the east room for some privacy.

We don't "pass the plate" here at LEFC. If you want to give towards the ministry of this church, there is an offering box on the welcome table.

Pastor Tom Starkjohn. Contact info: Cell # 402.297.0672.

Do you get the LEFC Weekly email? This is for regular attenders and it's the way to keep up with our church. Send an email to Pastor Tom at tomstarkjohn@gmail.com and say "sign me up for that email".

For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations,
and sing to your name.

Great salvation he brings to his king,
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,
to David and his offspring forever.

(Psalm 18:49; Psalm 18:50 ESV)

Lighting of the Advent Candle: *Mary's Candle*

We light a candle to remind ourselves that Jesus, the light of the world, came into a world of sin and darkness. Today we light the second candle, which we will call “Mary’s Candle”. The birth of the Christ was told to Mary before she conceived, and so she believed and anticipated his arrival. Luke 1:26-38.

Sing a song of praise to God: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*. Hymn #104

Historical Confession of Faith—EFCFA Statement #4: Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

A Song reminding us of the Gospel: *Let All Mortal Flesh*. Hymn #101

A story of a life changed by the Gospel

A song helping us memorize Scripture

The teaching of the Word—1 John 4:1-6

A Closing Song: *Angels from the Realms of Glory* Hymn #110

Because we have all our musical words printed in our hymn books this week, we have a combined bulletin and Life-Group notes this week. Each week at our Life Groups we practice four Life-giving practices, each of which are briefly listed here.

Life-giving Prayer (about 10 min)

1. Do you have any stories to share this week about worshiping God in the everyday stuff of life?
2. Try using the simple sentences below, filling in the blank. You could spend a bit of time on “glory”, people completing the sample sentence as many times as they want. Then move onto “Honor” and then “Thanks”.

- Glory: God, it’s amazing that you _____.
- Honor: God, I choose (or want or surrender) _____ to you.
- Thanks: God, thank you for _____.

Life-giving Truth (about 45-55 min)

There are a lot of questions here. Your Life Group Coach will pick out a few below that are best suited for your Life Group to help process this week’s Life-giving Truth. Don’t try to answer every question – just think through a few together.

1. Did you think about last week’s Life-giving truth, *God Gives Me Assurance as I Grow in Love*?
2. Read 1 John 4:1-6. When you think of a “false prophet”, who comes to your mind?
3. Read 2 Cor. 11:4 and 13-15. Paul is contrasting himself to these false apostles—he preaches the Gospel (v. 7) in love (v. 11). They preach another Jesus by another spirit, which is another gospel (v. 4). Have you ever encountered “another gospel”? What was it? How did you know?
4. Look at our confession faith #4 on Jesus Christ to the left. What do you see here that found within or alluded to by John’s Gospel confession “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” in 4:2?
5. How might the truth that *The Gospel Never Changes* encourage you to study the Gospel more closely?
6. Suppose Jim wants you to read a book he read. “You’ve got to read this. The author has an amazing testimony. He’s seen incredible miracles happen in his church. And he shows how God is doing new things. It’s so exciting!” Did what he say raise any concerns for you? What questions might you ask him?
7. Pastor Tom made the point that “confession” (like in 4:2-3) is not just acknowledgement. It is a heart-felt, trusting, fervent conviction of a truth. Why is such a ‘confession’ necessary for a Christian? Why can’t someone just agree to certain truths about Jesus and be saved? ‘
8. Read Galatians 1:6-9. What does Paul say here that is similar to what John is saying in 1 John 4:1-6?
9. Imagine that someone says to you, “I don’t get why Jesus had to come as a human. Why couldn’t he just stay God? I mean, didn’t God forgive sins and rule the world before?” How would you answer him? What is so vital about Jesus being “in the flesh”?

Life-giving Relationships (about 5-10 min)

Does anyone want healing prayer this week? Remember, this is praying for the heart of you, the person, not the circumstances you are going through or other people in your life. Is there anything churning in your heart that we can pray for?

Life-giving Impact (about 10 min)

1. Does anyone have any Pray & Watch stories from this week? Did you make a plan and follow through with getting together with anyone on your Pray & Watch list?
2. Get your Pray & Watch list. Let’s spend our last minute or two together praying over all these names together.