

Bay City Wesleyan Church  
December 24, 2017

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Sunday Morning 12-24-2017

Our Challenge for 2017 is to regularly ask Jesus, "Am I following you?"

When was the last time you asked?

<http://bible.com/events/333293>

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[Image]

Sunday, December 24 at 10:45 AM - 11:59 AM

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FREE Tickets for Christmas by the Bay

Enjoy the sights, songs, and smells of Christmas. Hear the story like it's the very first time. Cookies, coffee, and hot cocoa to share afterwards. Bring your family to a Christmas Eve experience you'll all enjoy and have the rest of the day to celebrate together. Perhaps you'll start a new tradition. Get your FREE tickets now.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-by-the-bay-tickets-39735145891>

[Image]

Our advent sermon series

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"A Simple Christmas" is a 4-week series encouraging us to keep Christmas simple by focusing on God's peace, joy, love, and our response of faith in Jesus. The series concludes with the message at Christmas by the Bay.

Who do you know that needs simple faith in Jesus? Invite them. Better yet, bring them, so simple faith transforms their lives.

Every birth story has a back story.

Luke 1:5-38 NIV

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in

the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteousâ€”to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.â€ Zechariah asked the angel, â€œHow can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.â€ The angel said to him, â€œI am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.â€ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. â€œThe Lord has done this for me,â€ she said. â€œIn these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.â€ In the sixth month of Elizabethâ€™s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virginâ€™s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, â€œGreetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.â€ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, â€œDo not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacobâ€™s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.â€ â€œHow will this be,â€ Mary asked the angel, â€œsince I am a virgin?â€ The angel answered, â€œThe Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.â€ â€œI am the Lordâ€™s servant,â€ Mary answered. â€œMay your word to me be fulfilled.â€ Then the angel left her.

<https://bible.com/bible/111/luk.1.5-38.NIV>

Sermon in a Sentence:

A moment can transform your life if you declare your simple faith.

â€œI am the Lordâ€™s servant. I trust you, Jesus.â€  
Itâ€™s that simple.

Your story continues the story of Christmas. You came to Christmas by the Bay and the odds are good that youâ€™re waiting for something like Zechariah and Mary were.

Instead of Gabriel, Iâ€™m bringing you a promise.  
Jesus can restore and renew your relationship with the Lord.

Now is your moment of truth.  
What ending will you write?

