

## KEY VERSE:

*Everyone was amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking Him for everything they had seen and heard. It had been just as the angel had told them.*

Luke 2:18-20



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# FOUNDATION CAFÉ SERVICE

13th December, 2015

## Advent 3: The Shepherds



CHALFONT  
ST. PETER  
PARISH CHURCHES



## KNOW WHAT:

- Today is the third of the four Sundays in Advent.
- Advent is a period of preparation and its name comes from the Latin word adventus, which means "coming" or "arrival".
- Over the last two weeks we have heard how the angel Gabriel appeared to the young girl Mary, and told her she would have a son who was to be called Jesus (meaning saviour). This happened just as the angel said and Mary gave birth to her son whilst accompanying Joseph on a visit to Bethlehem for a Roman census.
- This week we hear how an angel appears to shepherds out in the fields around Bethlehem and tells them of Jesus' birth. Then a host of angels appear, praising God. The shepherds go and find Mary with the baby Jesus in the feeding trough. They tell what the angel had said. Mary treasures all these events and continues to think about them.

## SO WHAT:

- The angels appeared to the most unlikely group of people. Who would believe them?
- For the shepherds it was an ordinary night when the most extraordinary happened. 'God moments' can happen in our lives too.
- The shepherds' story was really important to Mary. Although a woman of faith, these special events must have helped her, especially through the hard times. Are there special times or events that keep us encouraged?

## NOW WHAT:

- Let's check out the truth of Christmas for ourselves this week, just as the shepherds checked out what the angels told them.

## JIM'S JOTTINGS

### Billions of dollars' worth of treasure

On June 8, 1708, a Spanish galleon ship with 600 people aboard sank off the coast of South America as it was trying to outrun a fleet of British warships. It is believed to have been carrying 11 million gold coins and jewels from Spanish-controlled colonies, worth more than \$10 billion today. For 300 years teams have searched in vain for the lost treasure. 30 years ago a group claimed to have identified the site of the wreck but did not reach it in the deep waters. Ten days ago the Columbian Government announced that, after extensive and persistent searching, the wreck had been located and photographed by remote submarines. No-one has yet had access to it but the treasure trove will be enormous.

2000 years ago a group of shepherds, poor social outcasts, were looking after a flock of sheep near the tiny, insignificant village of Bethlehem. They saw angels telling them that the Saviour of the World had been born nearby so they got up, left their flocks and went to see for themselves. Arriving at the village they found the baby Jesus lying in a manger in a room where animals were normally housed. They had found treasure beyond worth in the midst of poverty. They went back to their flocks, giving thanks to God. Life would never be the same again. As we enter the final run up to Christmas, commercial pressure hits us from every direction. Santas give gifts, Christmas trees sparkle, lights produce magical scenes and we are driven into thinking that Christmas is all about how much we can consume. In the midst of all this, many of us despair and ask what the season is really about. The answer lies with the shepherds. They left what they were doing to discover if the angels were telling the truth. They were convinced. May each of us be like the shepherds this Christmas: make time to go apart from the festivities and discover the wonder of God entering the world to bring us His love. Hopefully, by Sunday, alongside this handout, there will be a short booklet to help guide your thoughts. Please take and read it, and discover a new Christmas this year.