

Advent Devotional - Day 24

2025

December 24th

Scripture: Luke 2:20 Verse: *"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."*



Reflection:

The shepherds didn't stay at the manger. They went back to their fields, their routines, their ordinary lives—but they returned changed. That's the heart of this verse. After seeing Jesus, they couldn't help but praise God. Their everyday work didn't disappear, but their hearts were lit with joy. For folks in Penn Hills, that might look like someone walking back into their job at the Giant Eagle or heading home after church with a little more hope than they had before.

What's striking is that everything they saw was "just as they had been told." God kept His word. That matters in a city like Pittsburgh, where trust can be hard to come by and promises sometimes fall through. The shepherds' joy wasn't just about what they saw—it was about realizing that God is faithful. When we see even a glimpse of that in our own lives, it's worth celebrating. It's worth telling someone. It's worth letting it shape how we show up in the world.

For Mt. Hope, this verse is a reminder that just like how the Christmas story didn't end at the manger, our worship shouldn't end every Sunday with the postlude—it should begin there and continue into our neighborhoods, workplaces, and homes. We should return to our lives with praise on our lips and a story in our hearts. Advent isn't just about waiting; it's about noticing what God has done and letting that joy spill out into the ordinary. Let's be a church that returns changed, and helps others see that God still keeps His promises.

Prayer:

God, like the shepherds, help us return to our everyday lives with hearts full of praise. Let the joy of your presence shape how we speak, how we serve, and how we see our neighbors. Remind us that your promises are trustworthy and your love is real. May our worship not stay at the manger but follow us into the streets of Penn Hills and beyond. Amen.

Today's Mt Hope Mindful Response Challenge:

Return with praise and let your worship spill into your daily routine. Find opportunities to sing in the car, pray before your meal at Eat-n-Park, or speak a word of encouragement to a coworker at work.



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