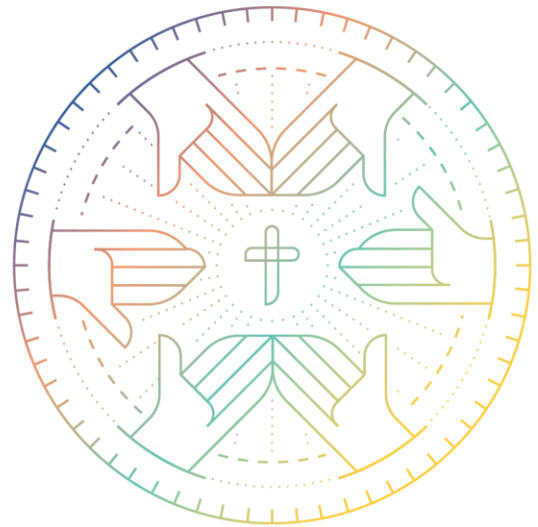


Group Life.

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MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week, we wrap up our series *The Promise* by talking about the birth of Jesus. We also discuss what the name of Jesus means. The birth of Jesus is an excellent example of God's promises being fulfilled.

Don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email.

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

What Christmas traditions do you have in your family to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

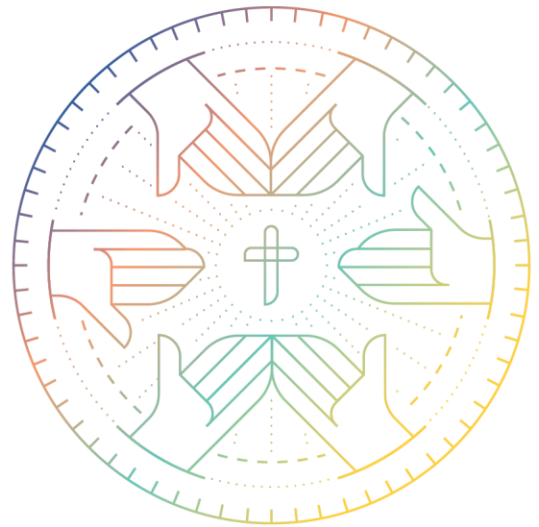
INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Anchor Verse: *Matthew 1:21*

The name of Jesus in Hebrew is Jehovah which means salvation. Jesus came to Earth to save us from sin and death, restore our relationship with God, provide a love that lasts forever, and defeat evil. The Latin phrase "Nomen est omen" translates to mean the name is an omen. Nominative determination is the hypothesis that people tend to gravitate the jobs that fit their names.

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INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. **Read Matthew 1:21, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, and Romans 16:20. Jesus's name means Jehovah is salvation. We see that His name was precisely who He was because he:**
 - Rescues us from sin and death.
 - Restores our relationship with God.
 - Provides love that lasts forever.
 - Defeats evil.

Which of these attributes sticks out to you?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE:

["Jesus was sent by God for a particular purpose, and His personal name bears witness to that mission. Just as the Yeshua/Joshua in the Old Testament led his people to victory over the Canaanites, the Yeshua/Jesus in the New Testament led His people to victory over sin and their spiritual enemies... In every way, Jesus lives up to His name. The name Jesus reminds us of the power, presence, and purpose of the risen Christ. It assures us that God's gracious intention is to save us. Our Lord Jesus brought God to humanity and now brings humans to God through the salvation He purchased." (Gotquestions.org)]

2. **Read Acts 17:22-28. J. R. R. Tolkien said "Humans have a deep longing to ..."**
 - Get outside of time and space
 - Escape death
 - Be in relationships with the divine
 - Find perfect love that never goes away
 - Triumph over evil

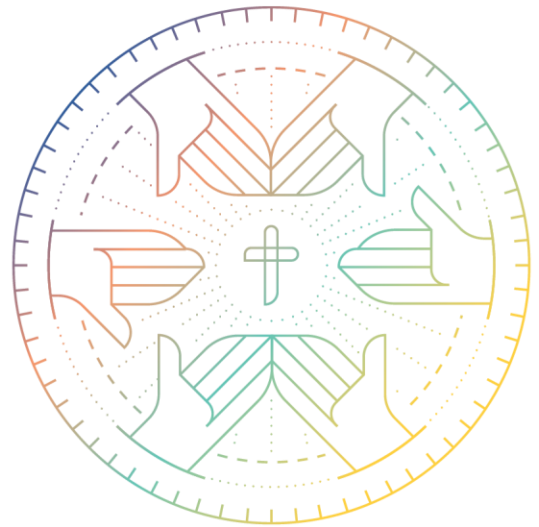
Why do you think that is?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE:

This scripture shows that the Greek philosophers in Athens were very religious, they had an altar dedicated to an "unknown god" but didn't know who this God was, Paul explained to them that the God they sought after deep in their hearts was the God of the universe. There's a longing in every heart for something/someone greater, for a deeper relationship with perfect love; a love without shortcomings. That's the "God vacuum" we all have in our hearts (Read Acts 17: 24-25) Jesus came to fill that vacuum by dying for us and living in the hearts of those who receive him. (Acts 17: 27-28)]

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APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

1. **Read Matthew 1 and Read Hebrews 4:15. How does the Gospel (Good story) apply to you today?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Read Matthew 1. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham..." You'll observe that Jacob was right there (a trickster) And so was Rahab the harlot and Ruth the heathen foreigner. King David; a great king with many flaws is also part of Jesus' genealogy as well as so many others. This shows us that Jesus related with all of us and knows the longing we have for him and still understands our weaknesses enough to identify with us, suffer the penalty for our sins and has now made us able to identify with him.]

2. **Re-Read Matthew, chapter 1. Can you share what it looks like in your own life to experience God keeping His promise to love us with a perfect love that lasts forever (Jeremiah 31:3)? How has He removed what's heavy in your daily life? What desires or longings do you feel the Lord has placed on your heart and has then fulfilled for you?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[The Lord loves you, even though he fully knows you. This is a promise fulfilled by God, just as the Christmas story is a promise fulfilled by God to send a redeemer to earth, to restore and redeem lost sinners. Our own love can be faulty, and yet Jesus' love is perfect at all times, forever. We cannot earn his love, and we cannot lose his love (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is by grace alone, through faith that we are saved when we accept Jesus as your personal savior (Romans 3:24; Romans 9:16). The Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled every promise made by God to us. As we celebrate Christmas, we can rest in the promise of God to fulfill our deepest longings through Jesus' birth, His sacrificial death for us on the cross and His resurrection (John 10:9; John 14:6). Let's praise and thank the Lord for the greatest gift and story ever told: Jesus, Jehovah is salvation!]

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Dear Heavenly Father, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, please let us remember the true meaning. Jesus came to save us from death and sin. He came to restore our relationship with You. Jehovah Is salvation. Jesus is a perfect name. It's the only name He could have been given. Jesus is the most beautiful name, and we thank you for sending Him. It shows Your love for us and how you fulfill the promises You have made since the beginning. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.