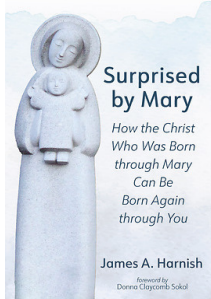
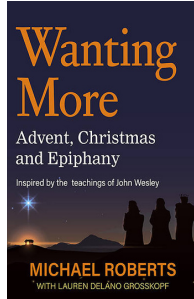


## NC Conference Media Center Resources

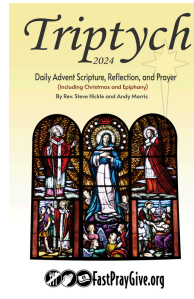
[nccumc.org/media-center](http://nccumc.org/media-center)



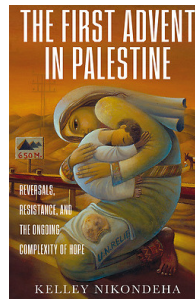
**Surprised by Mary: How the Christ Who Was Born through Mary Can Be Born Again through You** by James A. Harnish. Harnish draws on Scripture, tradition, and contemporary experience to explore the surprising claim that the same Christ who was born into the world through Mary can be born into the world again through us.



**Wanting More: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany: Inspired by the teachings of John Wesley** by Michael Roberts. Includes explorations into the maps, means, and methods of the season, the true reason for the season, and the blessings that come in the midst of it all.



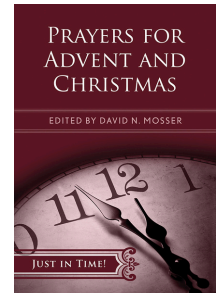
**Triptych 2024: Daily Advent Scripture, Reflection, and Prayer (including Christmas and Epiphany)** by Steve Hickle and Andy Morris. Find Mary, Zechariah, and the very angels of heaven responding to events by which God will be and is made flesh, coming among us to stay.



**The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope** by Kelley Nikondeha. Trusted scholar & community organizer Kelley Nikondeha takes us back, to where the landscape of Palestine is once again the geographic, socioeconomic, and political backdrop for the Advent story. Reading the Advent narratives of Luke and Matthew anew, in their original context, changes so much about how we see the true story of resistance, abusive rulers and systems of oppression, and God coming to earth.



**Blue Christmas: Devotions of Light in a Season of Darkness** by Todd Outcalt. Includes devotions, prayers, a worship service, and reflection questions for those who are hurting in this season.



**Prayers for Advent and Christmas** edited by David N. Mosser. This collection includes invocations, opening prayers, prayers of confession, and pastoral prayers for the Sundays of Advent, and Christmas Eve services.

## Upcoming Events

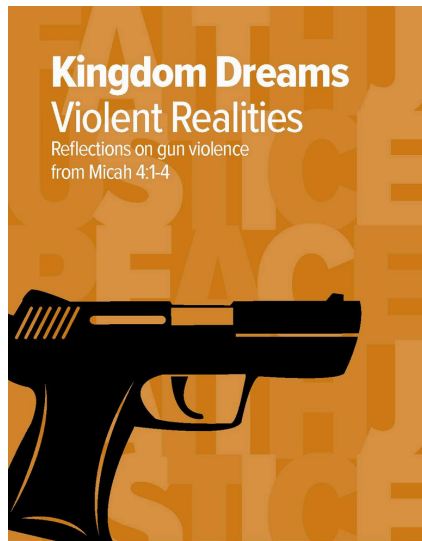
[nccumc.org/events](http://nccumc.org/events)

- **Dec 7:** Early Response Team Training, Wendell UMC, Wendell, NC
- **Jan 7:** Leadership and Church Administration: Tables are Open Webinar (Online)
- **Jan 15:** Local Church Treasurer Training, NC Conference Office, Garner, NC
- **Jan 24-26:** Middle School Girls Retreat, Camp Don Lee, Arapahoe, NC

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

[nccumc.org/grants](http://nccumc.org/grants)

- **Applications due Dec 15:** Child & Family Well-Being Grants (The Duke Endowment)
- **Applications due Dec 15:** Health Care Grants (The Duke Endowment)
- **Applications due Dec 31:** Overdose Response (NC Council of Churches)
- **Applications due Jan 8:** Peace with Justice Grant (NC Conference Board of Church & Society)



## Lenten Study on Gun Violence Prevention

[nccumc.org/christian-formation](http://nccumc.org/christian-formation)

The Bishop's Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and the Board of Church and Society encourage congregations to use the *Kingdom Dreams and Violent Realities Bible Study*, created by the General Board of Church and Society in 2016.

Focused on Micah 4:1-4, this study offers a launching point for additional discussion and sharing experiences related to gun violence, preventing loss of life, and advocating for common-sense gun laws. The study will "draw out the theological meaning of the passage, provide a window into the causes and implications of gun violence, and suggest faith-filled responses" to the challenge.



Sign up for our weekly email newsletter & topics related to your interests at: [nccumc.org/signup](http://nccumc.org/signup)



[districts.nccumc.org](http://districts.nccumc.org)

Each year, our Christmas Offering gives us the collective opportunity to do something extra special by blessing ministries throughout our connection. As our cabinet continues to listen to local churches, we are excited to offer a new opportunity this Christmas.

We recognize that many congregations are struggling financially, and we do not want to create any new monetary burden on you, your families, or the local church. One of the things that we have heard often is how our churches love participating in missions and ministries that connect us.

This Christmas, we invite you and your local church to discern where our sisters and brothers could use extra love **in your local community**. We encourage you to offer something special this Christmas for those in your community who need to experience the love of God in new ways. Because we are stronger together, we want our annual conference to shower Eastern NC with more love than ever before as we share the hope of Emmanuel, God with us.

Because your story is our story, we hope you will consider sharing how you offer God's love at Christmas. Also, share about your gift on social media using the hashtag #nccgives or #IGiveUMC.

Did your offering or gifts impact children in your community? Will a family benefit from your congregation's care? Does your gift draw folks into a closer relationship with one another and the community? We are better together.