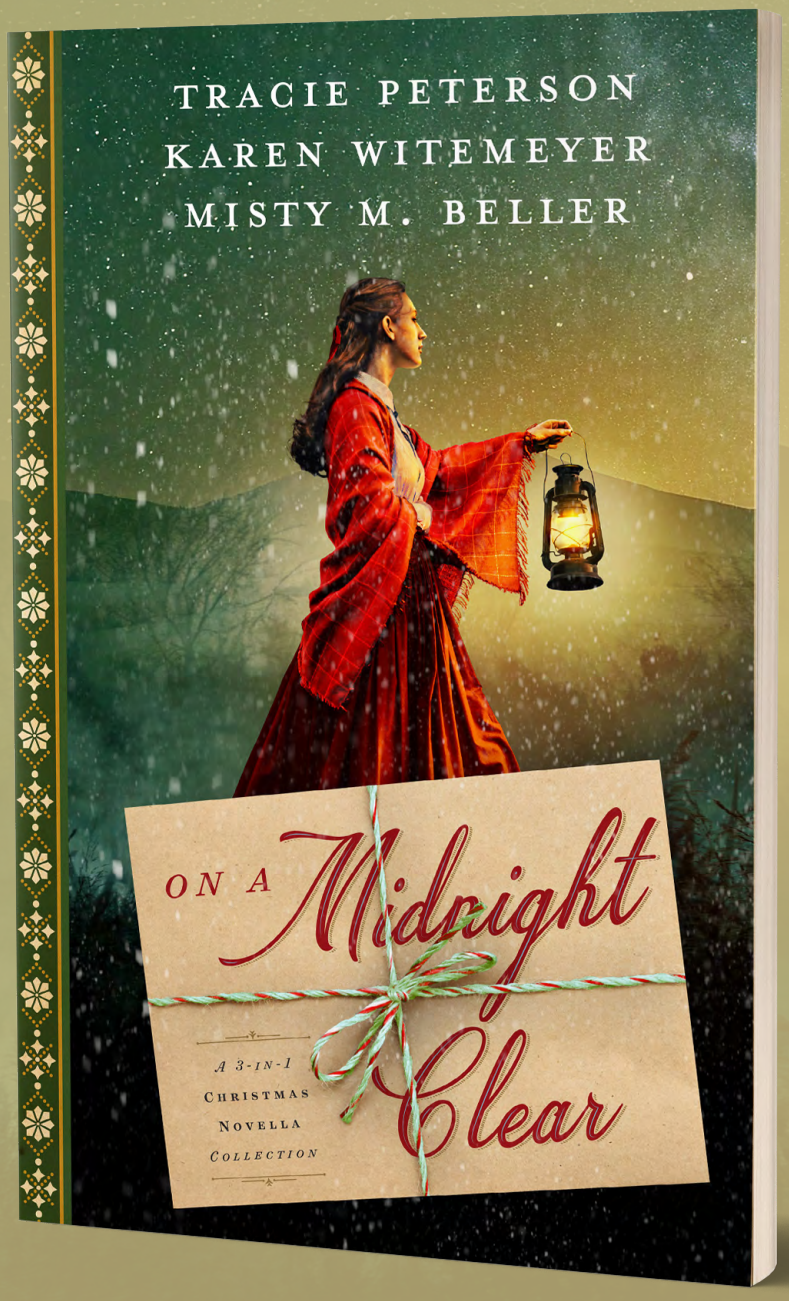
On a Midnight Clear

Book Club Guide



Dear Book Club Coordinator,

We are so excited to share our latest collaboration with you, *On A Midnight Clear*. This collection of historical, faith-based Christmas stories was a labor of love that we thoroughly enjoyed writing and hope you will take pleasure in reading.

Many of you are familiar with us as individual writers, but we know there are those of you who are new to our books. However, whether you are long time fans, or just getting started, we welcome you. Christmas is a celebration near and dear to our hearts. It's a time of hope renewed as we remember the birth of Jesus so long ago. Within our stories, you will find that we strive to share that hope and encouragement, as well as a few laughs, a couple of heart tugs, and a happily-ever-after ending that will leave you with a sigh of satisfaction.

Each of us as authors have a passion and ministry in the work we do for Bethany House Publishers. *On A Midnight Clear* is no exception. We had so much fun coming up with the ideas for our stories based on something to do with the Nativity. Our own little twist on wise men, shepherds, and no room at the inn is designed to entertain, but also to focus you back to the real story that took place over two thousand years ago.

We hope in these days of festivities and celebrations that you will take time out to remember the real reason for the season—the day God's love came to Earth in human form and gifted us with an eternal hope.

With love to all,

Tracie, Karen, and Misty

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Shepherd's Heart by Tracie Peterson

1. The answer to Angel's prayers doesn't look like she thought it would. Has God ever answered your prayers in unexpected ways? If so, how?

2. Loss is difficult to deal with, especially at Christmas. What suggestions do you have for helping someone through their loss during the holidays?

No Room at the Inn by Misty M. Beller

1. Hope sees the stage stop as more than a business—"a way to show God's love." Where do you see hospitality shaping the plot and the characters' choices? How have you seen God use one of your innate characteristics (such as the gift of hospitality) for His work?

2. The story features popcorn garlands, cider, carols, gift-giving, and the Christmas feast. Which tradition most meaningfully shapes the characters' hearts or relationships, and why? Share a tradition from your own life—how does it form your faith, hospitality, or sense of belonging during the season?

A Star in the West by Karen Witemeyer

1. Frank and Stella begin their courtship through friendly letters. Did you have a pen pal when you were younger? Have you ever corresponded via letters with a sweetheart or family member while separated? What makes physical mail so special?

2. Frank is a mathematician who sees the world differently than most. So when he offers Stella a mathematically-based compliment regarding her appearance, it would have been easy for her to take offense. Yet she takes the time to understand his meaning and is warmed by the intent behind the clumsy words. What allowances do people with different love languages need to extend to each other to keep a relationship healthy? What methods can we employ to avoid becoming easily offended and instead search for a person's true intent?

GETTING STARTED

- Print the advent paper chain links on heavy cardstock. You can use neutral paper or any color of cardstock that you would like.
- Assemble your advent paper chain countdown. See below for easy-to-follow instructions.
- Each day leading up to Christmas, tear off a paper chain activity and follow the prompt.

ADVENT PAPER CHAIN COUNTDOWN

Assembly Instructions

YOU'LL NEED:

- Cardstock
- Printer
- Scissors
- Stapler and staples (you could also use tape or glue)

STEP ONE

Choose the color of cardstock that you want to use and print the paper chain printable pages onto the paper.

STEP TWO

Use scissors to cut along the lines to create the strips of paper you'll use for the paper chain. Put the strips of paper in order starting with December 1 and ending with December 25.

STEP THREE

Now it's time to assemble your paper chain. To make the first link, staple the far ends together to form a ring. Once you have one sturdy loop, thread another strip of paper through the center of the loop. Then join the ends together and staple them together to form a second ring. Repeat this process until you have added all of the paper strips to the chain. When you are finished, hang it up in your home where you will see it often throughout the Advent season.

December 1

Start reading a Christmas novella.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 2

Make an Advent calendar. Fill it with small treats,
Scriptures, or acts of kindness to discover each day.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 3

Make Christmas cookies and give to the neighbors.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 4

Drink hot cocoa with someone special.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 5

Do a Reverse Advent Calendar. Each day, place a non-perishable
food item or toiletry into a box to donate at Christmas.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 6

Make or buy gifts for the homeless shelter.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 7

Send a Christmas card to someone who might need an extra blessing this season.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 8

Create a nativity scene together using paper, wood,
or clay—adding characters as Christmas approaches.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 9

Make ornaments with a special theme.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 10

Do a Christmas craft.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 11

Set Up a Jesse Tree. Add a new ornament each day
that represents a Bible story leading to Christ's birth.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 12

Read as a family about Christmas cultures around the world.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 13

Donate a gift to a child in need.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 14

Volunteer somewhere as a family.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 15

Take treats to the elderly in your family and get
them to tell a Christmas story from their childhood.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 16

Drive through the streets of your town
after dark to look at Christmas lights.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 17

Attend a local church or community presentation
that tells the story of Christ's birth.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 18

Visit a nursing home and sing carols.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 19

Watch a classic Christmas movie.
(My favorite is the original *Miracle on 34th Street*.)

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 20

Write down one prayer each day on a strip of paper,
connecting them to form a prayer chain to hang.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 21

Take a fun family Christmas photograph each year.
Don't be afraid to be goofy.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 22

Sing a Christmas carol with joy in your heart.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

December 23

Gather in the evening, turn off the lights, and read
Scripture by candlelight with soft music or silence.

—MISTY M. BELLER

December 24

Share stories of your first memories of Christmas.

—TRACIE PETERSON

December 25

Merry Christmas!

Thank God for the amazing gift of his Son.

—KAREN WITEMEYER

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