



CHRISTMAS DAY - BROWN HILL UNITING CHURCH

Treasure

Abstract

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid.

Luke 2: 8-10

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Friday, December 25, 2020 | Christmas | Nativity of the Lord | Christmas Day—Proper 2
Years ABC

On the same date: Nativity of the Lord, Christmas Day—Proper 3

Old Testament Isaiah 62:6–12

Psalm Psalm 97

New Testament Titus 3:4–7

Gospel (Luke 2:1–7) 8–20ⁱ

A time in which we are encouraged to stay alert to God’s purposes in our lives.

We hear the wonderful story of the birth of Jesus told again.

Today’s reading, **Luke 2.1-14,(15-20)**, provides an opportunity to:

- treasure the words of this familiar storyⁱⁱ

Pre-Service	
Introit	
O come all ye faithful	1, 5, 7
Greeting	
<p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p>	
and also with us	
Call to Worship	
<p>‘And the Word became flesh and lived among us’. We praise and worship you, Lord, as we celebrate the miracle of your Son, come to earth as a helpless baby to bring us light and life.</p>	
Candle lighting	
<i>The Christ Candle is lit.</i>	
Reader:	
<p>We light the Christ candle that reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world.</p>	
Scripture Reading: John 1:4-5	
<p>Through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light.</p>	

	<p>Carol 276 There's a light upon the mountain 1, 2, 4</p>
	<p>Gathering Prayer <i>Let us Pray</i> The candles are lit. The waiting is over. We gather round the crib reflecting on this most wonderful vision of your glory come to earth, to live amongst us. And filled with awe, we come to praise you, Lord. Amen.</p>
	<p>Welcome <i>Let us Pray</i> Lord, we are here with welcome in our hearts. We welcome the baby in the crib. We welcome each other into God's house. We welcome first timers and those who have been coming forever. We come together, filled with joy, to share our gifts with each other; to marvel and to learn. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Luke 2.1-20 <i>The Birth of Jesus</i></p> <p>2 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Shepherds and the Angels</i></p> <p>⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"</p>

<p>¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ¹</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
<p>We say Sorry Jesus of Nazareth, the smallness of your birth in the confusion of a city calls us to smallness.</p> <p>And so often, we, too, cause the confusion. We get lost in so many things. We turn now from those ways of stress.</p> <p>We take a moment to recognize the quiet voice in us, calling us back – again and again – to what matters most.</p> <p>Forgive us, take us, quieten us, to pay attention to love.</p> <p>Amen</p>
<p>Hymn/Song</p> <p>293 – unto us a boy is born</p>
<p>Response</p> <p>What Was Seen At Bethlehem</p> <p>I’m a pretty ordinary preacher. I’m not interested in telling you what I think I’d prefer to ask you what you think.</p>

¹ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Lk 2:1–20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Has it haunted you,
 what you would have heard had you been there that night in Bethlehem?
 Would you have heard the choirs of angels singing,
 or simply the sounds of barnyard animals shifting around?
 Would you have seen the star in the sky that night,
 or simply two poor and very frightened people without a bed for the night?
 Would you have understood the hushed silence of the divine presence?
 or simply the chill of a cold east wind?
 Would you have understood the message of Emmanuel, God with us,
 or would the cosmic implications of that evening have passed me by?

I am convinced that two people present there that night in Bethlehem
 would have heard and seen two entirely different scenes.
 I believe this because all of life is this way.
 God never presents himself in a way in which we are forced to believe.
 We are always left with a choice,
 that is God's way.

Certainly, very few people in Palestine saw and heard and understood
 what took place that night.
 The choirs of angels singing were drowned out
 by the haggling and trading going on in the Jerusalem bazaar.
 There was a bright star in the sky
 but the only ones apparently to pay any attention to it
 were pagan astrologers from the East.
 If anyone did see Mary and Joseph on that most fateful night,
 they were too preoccupied with their own problems to offer any assistance.

12 months ago, I took last year's Christmas day service.
 What a year it has been.
 It's been 9 months since we worshipped in this building.
 For some it has been a time of loss
 For others a time of challenge.
 For some it has been a time of loneliness
 For others a time to get out and care for those around us.

You see, what we see and what we hear in life
 depends not upon the events but rather who we are as people.
 It's not what is out there but what is inside of us.

There is a scene that has always fascinated me in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol."
 Christmas Past has just paid a very discomfoting visit to Ebenezer Scrooge.
 Clearly the old miser is shaken by the entire ordeal.

When wakes up, does he take the message to heart?
 No, he simply dismisses it by saying: "Bah, humbug!
 It wasn't real. Just a bit of last night's undigested beef."
 A vision to be taken to heart or simple indigestion? You tell me?

Oh, you say, had I been there at Bethlehem that night I would have seen.
 I would have understood. But would you?

	<p>There is one way of knowing. Ask yourself what you saw this Christmas. When you watch the news do you see chaos and strife, or do you see sheep without a Shepherd? When you went out to do your shopping do you see only hordes of people in the stores or did you notice the worried expressions on some of their faces? Worried because they are facing this Christmas without employment and they don't know how they are going to make ends meet.</p> <p>And ask yourself what you heard this Christmas? Did you hear only the blasts of 'I'm dreaming of a white Christmas', or did you hear the silent sighs of the lonely and the bereaved who may be dreading Christmas the breath of relief as our restrictions are lifted while around the world people are gripped with fear of the pandemic? And in the midst of the sounds of honking horns and people arguing, did you hear the feint sound of laughter because you donated toys for those that are doing it tougher than we are?</p> <p>You see, so often what we see and what we hear is not dependent upon the event but upon ourselves. If you did in fact hear the cry from the lonely, the laughter of the poor, if you saw the sheep without a shepherd, then you might just have seen the events that took place in Bethlehem that night.</p> <p>Bethlehem was a busy place that night But 99% of those who were there saw and heard nothing out of the ordinary.</p> <p>If you are off to a family function – let's remember those that are isolated. If you have more presents than you can poke a stick at – let's remember those have none. If the feeling of Christmas is ever more precious to you because of the year that was, Remember those for whom this year is not yet over.</p> <p>In the end perhaps one of our carols words it best: No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin. Where meek souls shall receive him still, the dear Christ child enters in.</p> <p>Amen</p>
	<p>Hymn/song O little town of Bethlehem 1,2 4</p>
	<p>Offering</p>
	<p>Notices</p>
	<p>Prayers for all people</p> <p><i>Christmas Day brings many things:</i></p>

heights of emotions, and depths too.
There are things we expect of ourselves,
and high expectations sometimes bring disappointments.
Coming today to church is a way
of making a small moment of quiet
in the middle of a day of high expectations.
Look at the light of the Advent/Christmas candles.
These lights burn for us
to remind us, and warm us, that love is the centre of all things.
Nurture and celebrate this love.

Let us Pray
 Today, in all the demands,
 we pray for those who are facing a Christmas
 without someone they love.

God of goodness,
hear us and be with us.

Today, in all the delights,
 we pray for those who are facing a Christmas alone.

God of goodness...
hear us and be with us.

Today, in all the celebration,
 we pray for those who are facing conflicts.

God of goodness...
hear us and be with us.

Today, in all the time at tables,
 we pray for those who are hungry.

God of goodness...
hear us and be with us.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come, your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever.

AMENⁱⁱⁱ

	<p>Hymn/song Joy to the world</p>
	<p>We are sent out God, send us out now, knowing that in small moments, today and every day, we can see you and honour you. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction We wish you a merry Christmas</p> <p>We wish you a merry Christmas We wish you a merry Christmas We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year Good tidings to you wherever you are. Good tidings for Christmas and a Happy New Year</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

ⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ © 2020 ROOTS for Churches Ltd

ⁱⁱⁱ English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988