

December 24, 2021

“Christmas Eve Reflection”
Sermon by Rev. Susan Drake

Luke: 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

Luke 2: 8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among God’s people!”

Luke 2:15-20

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.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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I’m not going to talk long tonight. I wanted the words of our scriptures and our hymns to speak for themselves. What I do want to say is that I have experienced a new understanding this year of how important the birth of something new in the darkest of times can be. There is this beautiful thing that happens to all of us who work in the hospital and are so tattered and worn out from walking through that valley of the shadows of death.

Just when we think all hope is lost right after someone has passed that the staff has worked tirelessly to save, a sweet refrain of Brahms's Lullaby will ring out all through the hospital over the intercom. You see they play this every time there is a new child born in the hospital. In that moment we are reminded that life continues, that even though in some rooms there is deep sadness in others there is great joy, great hope and great promise.

Jesus was born at night, in a dark time historically as well. He was born to an unlikely pair of everyday people just trying to find their way in the world. And God made something new, love came down and lived among us.

May your hearts be full of that renewed hope, may they be overflowing with love for your friends and families both those sitting with you and those that are gone but that you carry with you always.

May you have a moment where you are overwhelmed with gratitude for God's love so much that all you can do is whisper "thanks". AMEN

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