

Northminster Presbyterian Church
Weekly Devotional
Week of December 28th, 2008– January 3rd, 2009
1st Sunday of Christmas

Scripture Readings

- Isaiah 61:01-26:3
- Psalm 148
- Galatians 4:4-7
- Luke 2:8-40

Scripture: Luke 2:8-20 (NRSV)

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 those whom he favors!'

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.

Devotional:

The Advent season is about waiting, excruciating eternal waiting. Ask any child longing week after week for Christmas morning. Ask the prophets of old who for hundreds of years longed for the day of Christ's appearance. Ask the cosmos that groaned for millennia to be set free from decay. And then, just like that, the waiting is over. Christmas Day arrives! To shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, a host of angels announce that the long-awaited Savior has been born in a manger outside Bethlehem. And "with haste" (v.16), the shepherds rush to see Jesus.

So often we get it backwards. Our lives are one big rush during Advent. We hardly wait at all for Christmas morning to arrive. To and fro we rush, even wishing we had just one or two more days to get our last-minute shopping done. By contrast, those "certain poor shepherds" go about their everyday lives until that first Christmas morning. And then, then "with haste," they rush to Christ!

What might become of our world, of us, if on Christmas Day and every day thereafter, we rushed to Jesus instead of rushing to war, if we rushed to Christ instead of rushing to close the next deal, if we rushed to the manger instead of rushing right past the homeless poor around us? On Christmas morn, let us hasten alongside the world's shepherded poor to see God in Christ swaddled to earth in love. And having bowed our knees there, let us arise and go with them to "make known what was told them about this child" (v.17), so that "all who hear it may be amazed" (v 18): "Christ the Savior is born!"

Pastor Stacey