

WELCOME?

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-20

Friday, December 21, 2018

What is there to say that hasn't been said? We hear this passage every Christmas and then put it away for another year. What more can be said? The Romans (like any government) demands more in taxes; an 8-month-pregnant girl and her significant-other goes walking and riding a donkey a distance equal from Morgantown to Flatwoods, can't even get a room at the Super 8; gives birth in a stable (like a taxi back-seat?). But then what's all this about angels coming to those low-life shepherds? That's got to be a misprint. Those rich guys and governors should be told first about any big news, shouldn't they?

It's a little disjointed reading this passage on my back porch with the crickets and frogs filling the evening with song. The leaves are still on the trees but soon I'll be raking, mulching and blowing them. And when Winter Solstice rolls around and you are reading this we all may be shoveling snow. But this is a story for all seasons. To those who have read or heard it every year it's a comforting, well-worn passage that brings to mind past seasons of joy and (maybe) pain. For some of us so blest as to have seen the actual places, it brings to mind the rolling fields where the shepherds reclined in the moonlight watching their sheep and those steep, rocky paths that take one from Nazareth to Bethlehem. To those unfamiliar with the story it may sound like the first paragraph (above): incredulous, crazy. It may be long ago but it's also today. A solid man of honor and hard work obeys the government that wants more in taxes. He cares for his significant other in the best way he can, offering all he has. Others work the night because they have to work. It's their duty and livelihood. Into this live-and-work-a-day-world comes a loving and mighty God with celebration and promise for a new world order: God's world order.

Read this passage again, Like it's the first time. Hard, isn't it? But it's worth sharing, isn't it?

Prayer: Father, through the Holy Spirit bring these things to our minds and memories. Nudge us to remember that Joseph, Mary and the shepherds were ordinary people, like us. Bring into our lives the wonder and glory of your Word and your presence this Advent Season so that we are prepared to meet the Christ Child in the humble surroundings of the common people and stable. In the name of Jesus we pray, AMEN.

Gary Hartsog, Southern District Lay Leader alphaeng@earthlink.net