

Trinity United Methodist Church

December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

Pastor Dan Elmore

Scripture: Luke 1:26-35 (NIV)

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, **27** to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." **29** Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. **30** But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. **31** You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." **34** "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" **35** The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Sermon

One Christmas carol that many of my clergy colleagues could take or leave is *The Little Drummer Boy*. And I say that with fear and trepidation because I know that it is a favorite of many. I certainly saw the reactions to my post about *Mary, Did You Know?* Yeah. Anyway...

But anyway, as many have pointed out, whose bright idea was that? To send a little drummer boy into the maternity wing of Bethlehem and strike up a drum solo for a newborn baby and the undoubtedly tired parents?

But a Methodist colleague in a Facebook group this morning posted a post that I am completely stealing from, that for this year of 2020 there is a line in that carol that rings especially true for many of us: "I played my best for him." In a year that's continued to do its best to knock us down, and knock us down, and knock us yet again, our *best* is all we can do. And even that, sometimes, might not have been enough.

But in this night, in this season, we are reminded that that's exactly what God did for us. God showed up with His best for us, His very self in the flesh. And like the drummer boy points out, Jesus is honored when we do just that. When we show up with the best of intentions, when we show up with our best selves, even if a drum solo for a newborn isn't the most appropriate thing at the time. Jesus is still honored when we show up. When we bring our best, our best even at that particular moment.

Another post that I reposted from last year said, "I don't know who needs to hear this, but you're out of batteries." You should know that before it's too late and you tear into those gifts in the morning and you need those double- or triple-A's or whatever size batteries. But that post has meant so much more for me, especially, and for many of us who have been beat up by 2020 in various ways. Check yourself; you might be out of batteries. But that's why we still show up, whether here in person tonight or online watching at home, with us right now or whenever we view this worship time and take the time to show up and to worship in our hearts. We're bringing our best at that moment, and in that, God is honored.

And in that, we hear the simple message of Christmas yet again. That whenever we show up to God, God is faithful. Always faithful. And God shows up with us. That's what Immanuel means: "God with us."

And that, friends, in this simple worship service, is the simple message of "Simply Christmas." The best of all is God is with us, no matter what this world or this life throws at us.

Scripture also puts it another way in the beginning of John's gospel: That the light has entered into the world. That light is the light of Jesus Christ. And because that is the light of Jesus Christ, the darkness cannot overcome it.

Benediction

Let us go forth from this place proclaiming that we have seen the glory of God, believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness, which darkness shall not overcome. And may the love of the Father, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of the Christ Child be with you this Christmas and forevermore. Amen.