

Advent—Awaiting the Coming Messiah

Advent is a time of waiting. It reminds us that Christ is coming just as He promised. It is also important how we wait. Are we just killing time anticipating His return or is there something we are supposed to be doing as we wait? How should the hope within us inform our minds and enflame our hearts as we wait? What if it doesn't? God has given us His Word, Spirit, and Church to help us rightly understand and apply this hope in life. Want more information? Call Pastor Doug @ (802) 457-1304.

Please see *FCCW 2019 Advent Devotional* for more information.

December 19 Christmas Dinner and Pageant @ 5:30pm

December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 7pm

Luke 2:8 – 20

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the **glory of the Lord** shone around them, and **they were terrified**.

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you **good news of great joy** that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests**.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren

December 15th, 2019

Third Sunday of Advent

Morning Service:

Luke 2: 8 – 20

From Terror to Joy

1. The Glory of God Induces Terror (8-10).
2. The Peace of God Comes Through Jesus (10-14).
3. God Can Transform Our Terror into Joy (15-20).

The Shepherds were terrified. That holy night their terror was transformed to joy. Why? Was it because of the beauty of life? No, it was because of the beauty of the Life-Giver who had come to do just what He said He would do. God’s faithfulness transforms our terror to joy if we are in Christ because we can trust Him to do exactly what He has promised to do.

Evening Service:

Christmas Caroling

Meet at the church at 6:00 pm to go Christmas Caroling and then head to the parsonage afterwards for a light supper, cookies, hot chocolate, and fellowship. Caroling not your thing. That's okay. Come to the Parsonage around 7:00 pm to enjoy the light supper, cookies, hot chocolate, and fellowship.

The Third Week of Advent—December 15-21 Taking Gathered Worship Home

Sunday AM

READ **Luke 2:8-20; Psalm 89:1-52**. DISCUSS, Of what were the shepherds afraid? What happened to their fear? Why? THANK God for His promises and His faithfulness in keeping them.

Sunday PM

Come Caroling at 6pm & then the Christmas Party at the Parsonage!

Monday-Saturday

1. READ Candle Lighting litany—**The Shepherds' Candle**

Leader: Why do we light the Advent candles?

Family: Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life."

Leader: What is the meaning of the third lighted candle?

Family: The third candle is the Shepherds' candle signifying the Light of Joy that un-expectantly brightened the hearts of a humble band of shepherds at the announcement of Christ's birth.

Leader: Who were the shepherds?

Family: The Shepherds were a group of lowly men whose work was to watch over flocks of sheep. It was difficult work, often in solitude, and subject to the dangers of life in the wilds. They were often despised and rejected by others who did not value the type of work they did.

Leader: What do the Gospels say concerning the shepherds?

Family: Luke says, "In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will

be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'"

2. LIGHT the first three Advent Candles.

3. READ aloud Luke 2:8-20.

4. SING *Go Tell It On the Mountain*.

Go Tell It On the Mountain African-American Spiritual

Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.

1. While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light. *Refrain*

2. The Shepherds feared and trembled,
When, lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

3. Down in a lowly manger
Our humble Christ was born,
God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

5. PRAY: "Lord Jesus Christ, we give You all thanks and praise for Your victory over sin and death at the cross and the empty tomb. We bless You for redeeming us from the empty way of life we inherited from Adam and bringing us into a new life in Your family. We thank You for Your precious blood that was shed for us that we might be delivered from the dominion of darkness into Your glorious kingdom of light. We look forward with hope to Your return when we, with Your holy angels, will never cease to sing the wonders of Your glorious redemption. Amen."