



Christmas Day 2020
Luke 2:8-20

Pastor Chris Marien

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Newborn King. Amen.

Well, my friends, how are you this day?

Did you think you would make it to this glorious Christmas day?

My guess is that some of us did not think we would. And others did not even give the idea a second thought. And yet, many of us can speak the name of someone who did not the year to celebrate this Christmas day. It has been a year. And in a perfect world, where God's plan was aligned with my own plans – this Christmas day would be a celebration of a widely distributed and administered vaccine bringing to completion a year of torment at the hands of a virus most us could not pronounce back in March. Well God's timing is hardly ever ours and so we come to this day to worship our God and to celebrate and give thanks for a vaccine that has begun to shine hope into a world shrouded in the shadow of death. Now if that is not the hope and joy of this Christmas day – what is? And to remind us why we have come to the manger this day...I asked my friend Ben for a little help...

Come let us worship God...welcome everyone...to the love of God.

Rest for the weary...welcome everyone...to the love of God.

I wonder what Christmas looks like for you this year. Did you decorate your home? Does a tree bring light to the gray days of winter? Are there Christmas cards on fireplace mantles or taped to door frames? Do the smells of cinnamon and pine mingle through your home? Are the corners of your home filled with conversations and laughter? Did gifts get wrapped and put under your tree? Did you light candles on an Advent wreath or set-up a nativity with the holy family to remind you of the coming of God to you – once again a promise revealed to those who have sat in the land of deep darkness. A reminder that the light has shined. A reminder to each of us to tell the story of God's promised presence to all the world.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

***Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.***

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Or do you find yourself alone this morning? Hungry for all those things but instead, feeling the path of a tear letting go from an eyelid that has held back far too many tears through the long days of this year. Tears that have been spent in frustration or at the news of the death of someone you love. Loss comes to each of us in one form or another. More than once this year, have I found my own tears falling at the bedside of someone I have loved, mixed with the prayers and scripture passages offering hope and asking for help and praying for peace. And if that describes you this Christmas day – then hear a word of hope and promise and love for you in the simple words of a song you know so well – reminding you that this Christmas day – the light of God shines through the rough-cut planks of a stable – a simple home – to welcome our glorious God.

Be near me Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay. Close by me forever and love me I pray.

Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us forever, to love with you there.

However, you are celebrating this day. Wherever you find yourself. I would invite you to remember that you are loved. And this God who loves you – comes to you this day. What did the angel say, “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 Waukesha; in the city of Mukwonago; in the city of Boise; in the city of Pleasanton; in the city of Usa River; in the city of Usulután; in the city of San Jorge, who is the Messiah the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And since I am pretty sure none of you heard or saw the angels singing and praising God this day, let me leave you with these words ringing in your ears as you make your way to the manger.

In the morning when I rise...give me Jesus.

Give me Jesus, give me Jesus. You may have all the rest. Give Me Jesus.

And that will be enough. Amen.