

Words of Reflection – December 18, 2022
The Rev. John C. Wright



Text: Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-12

Pray with me: Father, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Come, Holy Spirit, come, visit, and fill our open hearts anew. Anoint the sharing of these words and allow them to bless your people, transform us into Christ's image, and guide us to fruitful labor in Jesus' mission right here, right now. Amen

A few weeks ago, I got the idea, hopefully from Jesus, to have a children's program with the two churches combined so that we could have all of the children come to worship with us and be part of telling the birth of Jesus and the arrival of God's great gift to humanity. I checked with a few moms to see if they would agree to bring their children and they agreed. Then we started inviting children from all of the connections we have: the Good News Club, neighbors, friends, etc. And somewhere in there I mentioned to Barbara what I was thinking and she didn't tell me I was crazy, but just got going, pouring energy into pulling this morning together. So, thank you, Barbara, for all of your work and support to bring about letting children be part of worship in such a special way. I would really like to ask each of you if you were ever in a Christmas pageant and hear your stories of what you remember. I think that in those memories is somehow a connection to Jesus and his birth that we don't fully understand, but those brief moments as a

wise man, shepherd, Mary, or Joseph are a part of our journey to the cross and salvation. The love of God that we witness in the unique birth of Jesus Christ to Mary and Joseph helps us grasp the great good news that God gave us His only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Christmas is the arrival of God's gift to humanity and it is the reason for the season we celebrate. Thanks to the band for coming and playing again. It's a bit of a reunion for all of us from those Sundays we gathered here in the midst of COVID-19 and worshiped together from this place. Thank you all for being willing to come and share your gift of music. Thanks to Fred and all those who helped cook and provide breakfast this morning. And thank you, each and every one, for coming, bringing your children, and letting them be part of this moment in time. A very special thanks to the Lands for having their baby just in time for Christmas and sharing him with us this morning. Thanks again to all who have willingly given of your time and finances to buy Christmas gifts for the Angel Tree children and letting God turn the heart of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents. Thanks to everyone who has worked to bring about this morning's worship and for just coming and joining with us this special Sabbath day. Let me pray and then we will sing a final hymn and be dismissed to our homes.

Pray with me: Father God, we thank you that you have sent the spirit of Elijah to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents. We thank you for the birth of Jesus, a king born in a stable and placed in a manger. We thank you, Lord, for coming and showing us what steadfast love for others looks like in human flesh. Guide our feet to go and tell all this great good news that Jesus Christ has come. We pray in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Benediction

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because he has anointed us to bring good news to the poor. He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Go forth into Jesus' mission and tell everyone you meet the reason for the season. Amen.