

CHRISTMAS DAY

25th December 2021

HillSide's Minister – Rev' Allan Booth

The Ultimate Gift

Blurb:

When we are willing to apply the message of compassion, inclusively and justice that God has given us; if we willingly embody that in our lives through our families, then we are rightly called children of God...

Luke 2: 1-14 MSG

The Birth of Jesus

2 ¹⁻⁵ About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

⁶⁻⁷ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

An Event for Everyone

⁸⁻¹² There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

¹³⁻¹⁴ At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,

Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

John1: 1-14 MSG

The Life-Light

1 ¹⁻² The Word was first,
the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.

The Word was God,
in readiness for God from day one.

³⁻⁵ Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—
came into being without him.

What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.

The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.

⁶⁻⁸ There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he was there to show the way to the Light.

⁹⁻¹³ The Life-Light was the real thing:

Every person entering Life
he brings into Light.

He was in the world,
the world was there through him,
and yet the world didn't even notice.
He came to his own people,
but they didn't want him.
But whoever did want him,
who believed he was who he claimed
and would do what he said,
He made to be their true selves,
their child-of-God selves.
These are the God-begotten,
not blood-begotten,
not flesh-begotten,
not sex-begotten.
¹⁴The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes,
the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
true from start to finish.

Message

So here we have it the day in which we can bring our Ultimate Gift series to a proper ending! I pray that one day we will understand just how powerful a thing God did in coming to live as one of us. During advent we have explored how the little insignificant things become vital, moving from the outsides to the insides; from dim shadows to bright spotlight focus.