

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 24, 2015

The Rev. Jane Esterline, PCUSA Teaching Elder

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 2:1-14 (15-20)

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before 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; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, 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." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

DEVOTIONAL

The Child is born, angels proclaim to shepherds and kings as alike in creation as they are opposite in society. New Light in our lives is rarely overpowering. God's Light is often revealed slowly and recognized in hindsight. Imagine the Light as an abiding presence that walks beside us as Jesus, the stranger, accompanied the two on the road to Emmaus. Didn't their hearts burn within them after Jesus, the stranger, left? Sir Edward Burnes-Jones' painting "The King and the Shepherd" hangs in the Carnegie Museum of Art; go see it. The angels take the hands of the shepherd and the king, leading them, not shouting at them. The king and shepherd walk to the Light of Christ without even recognizing the divine leading. Didn't their hearts burn within them? On this Eve of Christ's coming may your hearts burn within you, knowing Christ has provided the means of Light and Grace.

PRAYER

Light of the World, lead and guide in my life as you so led the shepherds and kings. Remain with us all, Lord Jesus, that we may celebrate your Light with all whom we meet. Amen.

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