

Grace Devotion

Week of December 8, 2024

Pastor Fred Young

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John 10:11-16

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

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"Pastores a Belen"

(As Shepherds Filled with Joy)

As shepherds filled with joy, to Bethlehem we're going,
For Mary's child is born this blessed Christmas morning.
See there, see there, the baby Jesus waits.
O let us bring our honey so sweet, an offering for the Child to eat.
Hurry, hurry and see the child born of Mary.
Let's go and see Emmanuel.

O holy, heavenly Child, the shepherds seek your blessing,
While singing happy songs, our hope and joy confessing.
We run, we fly, to greet the glorious Child.
With thankful hearts we offer our best to Jesus, at the manger we'll rest.
Hurry, hurry, and see, the child born of Mary.
Let's go and see Emmanuel.

This week we celebrate the joyous faces of the shepherds at the manger. "Pastores a Belen" is a traditional carol from Puerto Rico. The song invites the singer to

experience the wonder and joy of the shepherds as they came to greet the Holy Child of the Bethlehem stable.

When I was a kid, I loved the idea of all the characters assembling around Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. How cool for Jesus to have visitors bring gifts and bow before him. As an adult my questions changed and as a pastor they changed even more. Today I wonder how Mary, after giving birth in a barn, truly welcomed the motley crew of dirty shepherds pawing at her baby. The point of the visit was to set up the type of Messiah Jesus truly represented. One that would humbly offer themselves, for the sake of the flock. Perhaps the shepherds had questions of their own:

*What kind of sign was that, then?
Not the new star, strange as that may seem;
Not even the angels,
Or those weird travelers from the east;
But a rag-wrapped baby in a feed box.
I ask you, was that a sign to shake the gates of hell, or even Rome?*

*The sign grew up, or so I heard.
Came to a no-good end, they say.
Maybe that's all we can look for from our signs,
A gleam of light, a night of peace, before they fade away.
Who knows?*

PRAYER: Leading God, send us on our way to find the Light that will bring us peace. Amen.

Blessings!
Pastor Fred



December 8, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent

Shepherd Sunday

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Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes

Prelude

**Song: "*Glory to God in the Highest*" #24

** Call to Worship

When we are lost, when we wander off the path into the desert.

Gently, we are led by God.

When we crawl forward, dragging our bodies across the sand, tired and alone and thirsty.

Gently we are led by God.

When all our good intentions lead us astray, when they leave us with dry, dusty tongues that can no longer sing out the words of God.

Gently we are led by God.

** Hymn: "*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*" #131

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Shepherd's Candle

Prayer

Dear God, our Good Shepherd, empower our lives to be filled with love, that in loving others we might bear witness to your love for us. We give you thanks for shepherds, especially Jesus. Amen.

Response "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" #131(V2)

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

"May the Peace of Christ be with you!"

Joys and Concerns

Praying for Others/Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Confession/Assurance of Grace

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 40:1-11

John 10:11-18

Time for the Young at Heart

Meditation: "The Shepherds"

**Hymn: "*Joy to the World*" #125

Celebration of our Gifts

** Offertory Response: "*What Can I Give Him*" #154

** Prayer of Dedication

Service of Communion

Invitation to the Table

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Elements

**Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Song: "*Christmas Hallelujah*"

** Final Blessing

"A Choral Benediction"

Postlude:

#26

*On the screen

** Please stand, if you are able.

Upcoming Events

- **PAL Lunch:** December 21st
- **Christmas Eve Worship:** December 24th
@5:30PM
- **Holiday Open House:** December 29th, 2-5PM
Pastor Fred and Kara's: 141 S. Stratton St. Gettysburg

Trinity, Gettysburg Events:

- **Habitat for Humanity Workday:** December 14th
(Littlestown – 8AM -Noon)

Financial Information

General pledge Dec. 2024: \$1,516.00

General pledge Dec. 2023 \$3,793.00

YTD income: \$195,657.53

YTD expenses: \$235,172.01

YTD deficit: \$39,514.48

Upcoming Meetings

- Consistory: December 9th @ 6PM
- Bi-Laws/Procedures: December 11th @ 6PM
- Staff Meeting: December 16th @ 4:30PM
- Transition: December 18th @ 6PM
- Transition Team: November 20th @ 6PM



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

Thank you for today's worship leaders:

Fred Young - Pastor
Amy Fawks – Associate Pastor
Christian Keller – Organist
– Head Usher



John 10:11

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Luke 3:1-6

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