

Grace Devotion

Week of December 22, 2024

Pastor Fred Young

+++++

Luke 2:8-15

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And 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!" ¹⁵When 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."

+++++

Within my collection of Christmas books, *The New Guideposts*, *Christmas Treasury*, remains a solid first choice for devotional reading. Our focus for this final week of our Faces at the Manger advent theme turns to Angels. Often, I hear folks speak of their guardian angel. Last year, I found small pocket guardian angels, that were part of my gifts to Kara and Emily. Perhaps, you too have a guardian angel. I invite you to listen to this story by Margaret Waage about her angelic encounter.

On Christmas Eve, after getting off my typing job at noon, I stood defeated in the crowd waiting for the subway train. I had worked by myself all morning, since all my fellow workers had been given the day off. Many people around me were talking happily about their trips home to their families. Some had little children with them. I had no home, just a rented room, no plans, no husband and no children, although I was getting well into my thirties.

Suddenly, I heard crystal notes of two flutes interweaving. Down the platform were two young girls, playing Christmas carols. In their serene young beauty, they looked

like angels in disguise.

I added my quarter to the pile of change in their open flute cases. The train came and went, but I lingered, fascinated by the people who came forward to drop coins, even bills. Most were shabbily dressed, but their faces seemed alight with happiness. These were the poor; the people Christ had greatly loved. On that cold, noisy subway platform they were joined, without knowing one another, in the great Christmas Feast of Love that I had lost sight of in my self-pity.

Finally, I heard them play, "*Oh Little Town of Bethlehem*" and I found myself remembering words that I had not sung since my childhood. "Oh, Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today." Suddenly, there in this bleak subway station, everything changed. I took the next train, feeling warm and contented. I knew that those two young strangers had given me a magnificent Christmas gift. They had put Christ back where He belonged, in Christmas and in my heart.

+++++

PRAYER: May we all this blessed Christmas Season, welcome the angels that surround us daily. May we recognize and acknowledge how their guidance, presence and love offer comfort, peace, joy and hope today and always. Amen.

Blessings!
Pastor Fred



December 22, 2024
4th Sunday of Advent
Angel Sunday

+++++

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes

Prelude

**Song: “*Christmas Hallelujah*” #26

** Call to Worship

Come, the angel choir beacons us to follow.

May we be open to the Divine’s messengers.

Come, an angel tells us to expect change.

May our hearts be receptive to the redesign of our lives.

Come, an angel gathers us around a new Light.

May we see that this Light will wrap the world in peace.

** Hymn: “*Angels We Have Heard on High*” #132

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

“May the Peace of Christ be with you!”

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Angel’s Candle

Prayer

Dear God, you surround us with your angels of love so that we are able to live lives filled with joy. Thank you for these angelic beings and help us to become angels of love for others. Amen.

Response: “Angels We Have Heard on High” #132(v1)

Joys and Concerns

Praying for Others/Lord’s Prayer

Prayer of Confession

Silent Prayer

Assurance of Grace

Special Music

Scripture Readings:

Luke 1:26-35, 2:8-15

Time for the Young at Heart

Meditation: “The Angels”

**Hymn: “*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*” #133

**Advent Affirmation of Faith

Celebration of our Gifts

** Offerory Response:

“*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*” #133(v1)

** Prayer of Dedication

**Song: “*Glory (Let There Be Peace)*” #23

** Final Blessing

“*A Choral Benediction*” (circle around sanctuary)

Postlude

** On the screen ** Please stand, if you are able.

Thank You!

Thank you to Paula Frey for providing our special music today. Paula is Christian's Grandmother.

Please welcome her to Grace.

Upcoming Events

- **Christmas Eve Worship:** December 24th @5:30PM
- **Holiday Open House:** December 29th, 2-5PM
Pastor Fred and Kara's: 141 S. Stratton St. Gettysburg
- **Town Hall #6** – January 12th @10AM

Trinity, Gettysburg Events:

Christmas Eve Worship 3PM and 8PM
Dinner Church – January 8th @5:30PM

Financial Information

General Pledge Dec. 2024: \$3,957.00

General Pledge Dec. 2023 \$7,863.00

YTD income: \$198,623.53

YTD expenses: \$248,578.83

YTD deficit: \$49,955.30

Upcoming Meetings

- **NO** Worship and Music Committee on 12/23
- Property Committee - January 6th @6PM
- Consistory – January 13th @ 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

Jenn Weaver – Head Usher

Christmas Word Scramble



1. HRCEE
2. IDCER
3. RGHICN
4. ECICLI
5. INROBB
6. MWOASNN
7. ATREWH
8. LSEVE
9. ADENLC
10. HISGTL

SNOWMAN

CIDER

CANDLE

ICICLE

LIGHTS

CHEER

WREATH

GRINCH

ELVES

RIBBON

D	L	R	A	N	G	E	L	R	H	O	U	E	A
I	O	L	E	A	P	E	D	O	O	N	A	B	M
A	R	F	B	R	I	L	J	E	L	S	S	S	A
R	D	E	L	L	I	F	L	U	F	P	E	P	R
F	F	H	P	E	S	O	J	D	D	H	F	I	Y
A	P	A	E	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	D	R	E
N	R	B	V	A	S	T	O	I	R	H	A	I	V
A	E	L	O	O	E	E	R	E	T	W	C	T	I
Z	L	E	H	R	R	E	R	R	E	O	A	W	E
A	A	S	H	M	N	E	I	V	E	M	E	D	C
R	T	S	O	N	O	B	D	F	A	B	J	D	N
E	I	E	L	P	R	E	G	N	A	N	C	Y	O
T	V	D	Y	N	S	D	R	O	W	C	T	A	C
H	E	O	B	A	B	A	B	Y	R	N	O	S	R

FAVORED
 SPIRIT
 JUDEA
 LORD
 BORN
 BABY
 BIRTH
 ANGEL
 SERVANT
 JOSEPH
 NAZARETH
 WORDS
 CONCEIVE
 RELATIVE
 LEAPED
 BELIEVED
 BLESSED
 PREGNANCY
 FULLFILLED
 SON
 HOLY
 WOMB
 AFRAID
 MARY

ADVENT

HOPE PEACE JOY LOVE

